

JEHOVATSHE: THE POLYCENTRIC REVIVAL HISTORY OF NAGALAND

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HUSEZO RHAKHO

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VITA

The author of this work is Husezo Rhakho. He was born on July 10th, 1991 at Kohima, India. He was born and raised in Nagaland for most of his life. He received his undergrad in History majors at Patkai Christian College, India, Master of Divinity at Kohima Bible College, India. He served and worked in a Church in Dimapur, Nagaland and also worked extensively in media ministry via writing articles and preaching. He is the author of the book “The Invisible Warfare: Challenges faced by the Naga Christendom” and has contributed articles extensively in Nagaland. He came to the United States in 2018 and studied for a year and half at Westminster Theological Seminary, PA, for Master of Arts in Religion. In May 2020, he will graduate with Master of Theology in Christian Thought at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, USA.

ABSTRACT

The percentage of Christians in the North East Indian Hill province of Nagaland is more than ninety percent. This astoundingly high concentration of Christians is unlike any other portion of India. What produced the conditions for this to occur? What is the history that led the head-hunting Nagas to this reality? That is the focus of this thesis.

There are very limited good resources available which traces the redemptive Polycentric history of Nagaland. Christianity in India is often studied under the tradition of St. Thomas and focusses on Christianity in South India. Most historical books have neglected the trends and growth of Christianity in North India. With the twentieth century renewal movement all around the world, North East India has also witnessed Revivals. There are three provinces in North East India, namely, Nagaland, Mizoram and Meghalaya, where Christianity is above ninety percent. This work is an attempt to introduce the trends of Global Christianity in India, but the focus is primarily on Nagaland.

The primary source for this thesis has been through interviews with people who have experienced the Revival movement first-hand. This thesis attempts to place this Revival in its context, which is why early Naga history, such as the genesis of Christianity in Nagaland – through the work of the early Baptist missionaries from America – has been discussed in detail. An attempt has also been made to give an account that embraces the early polycentric nature of the Revival – the signs and wonders and the evidence of the continuing work of the Holy Spirit.

The readers will be able to determine the significance of the polycentric Revival in Nagaland and its effects which are evident today in the social, cultural and spiritual life of the

Nagas, and how this irrevocable transformation has also contributed globally in fulfilling the Great Commission.

INTRODUCTION

Once renowned for their skills at beheading their foes, the Nagas today boast the highest percentage of Christians in their province – more than any other in the whole of South Asia. This unusual phenomenon was largely due to the modern Revival which took place from the 1950s-1970s. This thesis traces the background, describes the origins, and recounts some of the startling events that make up the Nagaland Revival and its impact on Christianity in Nagaland.

A dearth of resource materials has consistently hampered efforts to narrate a coherent account of the Revival. The sources utilized in this thesis have been primarily from interviews with the active participants of the Revival, chapters on books, articles, church magazines, and unpublished materials.

Christianity in India is often traditionally studied under the work of St. Thomas and emphasis is laid on Christianity of South India. Most historical books fail to mention the growth and development of Christianity in North East India. This thesis will make it apparent that along with the the twentieth Century renewal movement globally, North East India, and Nagaland in particular, also witnessed various Revival movements. This attempt is a first of its kind, as the Revival history of Nagaland has never been systematically documented. There are three provinces in North East India – Nagaland, Mizoram and Meghalaya – where Christianity is above ninety percent. This work is an attempt to introduce the trends of Global Christianity in India, but the focus will be primarily on Nagaland, where Christianity is ninety nine percent.

One reason for the lack of materials on this subject is partly due to the internal conflict within the Nagas, regarding doctrines of the different denominations; this began in the 1940's and is still ongoing today in some areas of Nagaland, between the Baptist denomination and the Nagaland Christian Revival Church. Another may be due to the lack of resources to build

the base on. Most scholars have researched on the work of the early Baptist missionaries, how the Nagas accepted Christianity, and the impact of Christianity in Nagaland today; however, the work here is sensitive as it touches on topics such as the Indo-Naga war and the conflict on the gifts of the Holy Spirit between the Baptist Church and the Revivalists. Further, there is also a lack of university-trained Pentecostal historians in Nagaland, who are impartial on the topic. This is the reason why most of the primary sources in this thesis are from interviews with eyewitnesses and those who had experienced the Revival movement first-hand. The secondary sources include books and papers based on the topic. The central focus of this thesis is the Polycentric Revival movement in Nagaland, from the 1950's onward, which is ongoing even today.

The First Chapter highlights the people of Nagaland, the Nagas. Although no written documentation is available, there exists many oral traditions regarding the origin of the Nagas, and since these theories play an integral role in understanding them, they have been scrutinized. The significance of the location and physiography of Nagaland from a geo-political point of view has also been discussed. Further, the socio-economic, socio-political and cultural life of the Nagas has been highlighted. Special emphasis has been laid on the connection between the practise of head-hunting and the religious aspect of the Nagas. Finally, some light has been shed on the role of women in the Naga community.

Chapter Two lays out the introduction of Christianity to the Nagas by the Baptist Missionaries from America in the nineteenth century – this is pre-Revival history. During this period, India was a colony under the British Empire; Britain perceived the significant position of Nagaland and so began expanding her territory into the then-sovereign Nagaland. Missionary work in India was flourishing by then and the missionaries were passionate to spread the gospel even among the far-flung tribal areas of North East India. The work of Miles Bronson, the first missionary to Nagaland and his work has been reviewed. The first converts

may have been unable to spread the gospel, but that does not belittle their work. Significant research has been done on the missionary endeavours of Edward Winter Clark and his wife Mary Mead Clark, because of the foundational role they played in the Nagaland mission.

It is noted through the statements from the missionaries themselves that they put their lives on the line in order to spread the gospel to the Nagas; these hill people were ferociously protective of their lands and any person foreign was considered as an intruder. The Assamese convert – Godhula – and his work in helping the Clarks reach out to the Nagas is also highlighted. The other assistants of the Clarks, the starting of the First Mission Centre and the fruits of their labour in spreading the gospel has also been discussed.

The next section of this chapter highlights the role of the Nagas in World War I and World War II. The well-known ‘Battle of Kohima’ and its impact have also been briefly discussed. The third and final section of the chapter traces the Indo-Naga conflict; the root cause for this war was that the Nagas wanted to maintain their sovereignty and the Indian government did not. The tragic history of the manner in which the Nagas were suppressed has been recounted. But as God can bring forth ‘beauty from ashes,’ the atrocities committed against the Nagas by the Indian government set the stage for the Revival to occur, as can be seen in this chapter.

The Third Chapter, the heart of this work, gives a detailed account of the Polycentric Revival history of Nagaland. The contribution of G. E. Hunter and Rikum Ao (his associate) in the Repentance Revival has been highlighted. The movement of the Holy Spirit in different districts of Nagaland, across different periods and among different tribes of Nagaland has been discussed through the accounts of different witnesses. The first phase of the Revival movement which began in 1957 – its genesis, development and impact has been discussed first. Both acceptance and opposition to the Revival has been highlighted and the persecution faced by

those who experienced the touch of the Holy Spirit has been recounted through eyewitness accounts. Special emphasis has been laid on the miraculous signs and wonders which accompanied the Revival movement in Nagaland.

The next topic discussed is on the First Revival Convention held in Nagaland and the significance of the word 'Jehovatshe.' The Second Revival Convention is then reviewed, and the advent of Nagaland Christian Revival Church (NCRC) is highlighted. Further, the Billy Graham Crusade in Nagaland of 1972 and his own report of it is presented. The important leaders of the Revival movement such as Neivotso Neikha and I. Ben Wati and their contribution is also mentioned.

The second wave of the Revival movement is then discussed in this chapter. This period, which witnessed an increase in the spread of the Revival movement, details the manner in which the Holy Spirit was poured out across the people of Nagaland. Important women who played a great role in this movement, such as Beilieu Shuya, and their contribution has been presented. Important women today, such as Narola Imchen, who received the Holy Spirit during this Revival movement, and their contribution in the ministry today have also been emphasized. Finally, the overall impact of the Revival movement since then and till today, among the Nagas and beyond, has also been researched.

This thesis is a testimony to the saving power of Jesus Christ throughout the ages. Nagas are a small people group who were once in darkness but have been called to the light. They are a colourful people whose culture has much to offer. But their greatest contribution, as a result of the Revival movements, is the mission work they are involved in throughout the globe today. Jesus promised to send the Holy Spirit once he left earth, and this promise is alive in the Nagas today; they are living testimonies to it. This thesis is an attempt to present the true history behind the Revival movement of Nagaland.

CHAPTER - 1

WHO ARE THE NAGAS?

INTRODUCTION

This chapter is an introduction to the highlander-people of North East India who are called “the Nagas.” The origins of this ancient Asian people are shrouded in mystery. Yet, the established history of this people shows that they have held the reigns of their sovereignty in a land dominated by various dynasties and competing interests. The Nagas are a tribal people whose cultural traits are diverse but who are bound together by yet stronger ties of commonality.

THE NAGAS

Naga is a generic term referring to a group of people who inhabit the Naga Hills located in the North Eastern region of India in South Asia. The Nagas were always a sovereign nation. The Nagas are Mongoloid in origin and composed of more than 30 tribes which exhibit significantly diverse cultural traits. Based on the latest release of linguistic data from the 2011 census by the government of India, Nagaland is the most linguistically diverse state in India, with fourteen languages and seventeen dialects. They possess a centralized government system with a Governor, Chief Minister and other Ministers for ruling the entire state, which are chosen democratically; however, every village consists of a head chief and council members. The Naga tribes are full of folklore, music and song.

Nagaland, tapering towards north and with its narrow end at the south-west, is one of the easternmost states of the Indian Union.¹ The state lies between 25 degrees 60 minutes North

¹ T. Lanusosang, *Nagaland a Study in Social Geography*, (Kohima: Directorate of School Education, Nagaland, 1989), 35.

and 27 degrees and 40 minutes North latitude and 90 degrees 20 minutes East and 95 degrees and 15 minutes East longitude; it has an area of 16, 579 square kilometres.² Nagaland shares its border with Assam in the West, Arunachal Pradesh in the North-East, Manipur in the South and Myanmar in the East.³ Thus, this places Nagaland in a very strategically important position in the geopolitics of India.⁴

Being an extension of the Himalayas, the entire region of Nagaland is characteristically hilly with just a few expanses of plains in the west, which adjoin the plains of Assam. The altitude of the state ranges from around 110 meters in the west to 3, 840 meters in the extreme east at Saramati, the highest peak.⁵ The mostly rugged terrain of Nagaland has been dubbed as one of the world's most inaccessible corners.⁶

Despite the lack of a script or map, each tribe retained the traditional boundary lines in their memory, and the same was carried over from generation to generation. When A. Z. Phizo, the then President of the Naga National Council, was asked by some Naga regional leaders about the Naga boundary, he remarked, "the land lying between the Chindwin River and the Brahmaputra River is our land."⁷ It is a fact that this traditional boundary line was honoured by the Ahom kings of Assam till the time when the land of the Ahoms ceded to British India through the Treaty of Yandabo in 1826. An important aspect of the Naga life is that each tribe has its own area of land. Ramunty alludes that Nagaland is divided into tribal areas, and it is practically and morally owned by that tribe; no one ever sells the land of one tribe to an outsider. Within the area of the tribe, the land is further sub-divided, and it belongs to the respective villages.⁸

² Statistical Handbook of Nagaland (Kohima: Directorate of Economics and Statistics, 1997), 20.

³ T. Lanusosang, *Nagaland a Study in Social Geography*, 35.

⁴ V. I. K. Sarin, *India's North-east in Flames*, (New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House Pvt. Ltd., 1980), 20.

⁵ T. Lanusosang, *Nagaland a Study in Social Geography*, 1.

⁶ P. D. Stracey, *Nagaland Nightmare*, (Bombay: Allied Publishers Ltd., 1968), 5.

⁷ Bendangsashi, *The Naga Boundary* (Mokokchung: Morung Express, July 8, 2013), 7.

⁸ Murkot Ramunty, *The World of Nagas* (New Delhi: Northern Book Centre, 1988), 1.

On November 13, 1866, the Lt-Governor of Bengal issued the order that the Naga Hills district consisted of the Nowgong, which lay in the right bank of the Dhansiri River and the Naga Hills on both banks of the Doyang River. Subsequently, in December 1867, the Lt-Governor defined the district's boundary up to the Doyang River on the east.⁹ Based on the 1867 definition of boundaries, Suryyakanta asserts that the Nagas occupy the hills between 93 degrees west to 97 degrees east longitudes – an area extending from the valley of the Kapili on the west to the interior of the Patkai Hills on the north western border of Burma (Myanmar) on the east.¹⁰ This geographical location of the Nagas was apportioned between India and Burma (Myanmar) after their respective declaration of independence, and a vast portion of Naga territory has been excluded from the present state of Nagaland which now resides in Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur and Burma.¹¹ During the time of statehood of Nagaland in 1963, the total population was about five hundred thousand. The surrounding neighbours which bordered Nagaland were Burma (Myanmar) to the east, Arunachal Pradesh to the north, Assam to the west and Manipur to the south. This geographical location of Nagaland was officially recognized on August 1, 1960.¹²

Nagaland was formally inaugurated as a state on December 1, 1963, as the sixteenth state of the Indian union. The state comprises of eleven administrative districts and is inhabited by sixteen major tribes along with other sub-tribes. Each of the Naga tribes is unique and distinct from the others regarding custom, language and dress. Other Naga tribes are found in Manipur, Assam, Arunachal Pradesh and even Myanmar.¹³

⁹ Shibani Kinkar Chaube, *Hill politics in northeast India* (New Delhi: Orient Longman, 1973), 12.

¹⁰ Suryyakanta Barujari, *Anglo-Naga relations* (Ph.D thesis, Guwahati University, 1969), 17.

¹¹ Phuveyi Dozo, *The Nagas: A valid reason to live together with a vision* (Dimapur: Fellowship of Naga Baptist Association, 2000), 45.

¹² Murkot Ramunny, *The World of Nagas* (New Delhi: Northern Book Centre, 1988), 1.

¹³ Visier Sanyu, *A History of Nagas and Nagaland*, (New Delhi: Commonwealth Publishers, 1996), 35.

ORIGIN

It is generally accepted that the earliest specific reference to the Naga territory was made by Claudius Ptolemy in his book *Geographia* in 150 A.D. when he referred to the area as the 'realm of the Nagas.' According to V. K. Nuh, the Royal Chronicles of Manipur, recorded by Meidingu Nongba Lairen Phakhamba, mentioned about the Naga Haochnag village of Kabui (Impui) Naga around 33-150 C.E. Both these records indicate that the Nagas must have occupied the land in which they presently dwell as early as around first century B.C.E.¹⁴ W. C. Smith further claims, "According to the annals of the Ahoms, when the Ahoms invaded Assam in 1215 A.D., the different Naga tribes were settled in different habitats."¹⁵

Another account placing the Nagas in their present location comes from the 13th century AD, when the Ahom, a Tai-speaking tribe, migrated into what is now North East India. The historical records of their kings, the Borinjus, recount how the Ahom prince Sukhapa led his tribe through the Patkai Hills en route to modern day Assam. They fought fierce battles with the Nagas, who had already settled in the hills, and many of the Ahom were killed.¹⁶

According to oral tradition, Nagas are ethnically of Mongoloid stock. Mary Mead Clark¹⁷ remarked that, "This race is in the extreme North East of India, are Mongoloid stock, widely differs in custom, language and religion."¹⁸ Tajenyuba Ao also describes Nagas as having "more characteristic of Mongoloid race and classified as Indonesian complex. The inherent characteristic features of Nagas were their internecine head-hunting warfare and they

¹⁴ V. K. Nuh and Lasuh, Comp, *The Naga Chronicle* (New Delhi: Indian council of social science – North Eastern regional centre, 2002), 68.

¹⁵ W. C. Smith, *The Ao Naga tribes of Assam* (London: MacMillan and Co., 1925), xxi.

¹⁶ Paul Hattaway, *From Headhunters to Church Planters: An Amazing Spiritual Awakening in Nagaland* (United Kingdom: Piquant Editions Ltd, 2006), 2.

¹⁷ A pioneer woman missionary to Nagaland, wife of Edward Winter Clark.

¹⁸ Mary Mead Clark, *A Corner in India* (Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1907), 2.

were known as head-hunters. In the early period of British contact with the hill tribes in the North East of India, the Nagas were the toughest and most warlike tribes.”¹⁹

The first western journalist who visited the Naga Hills in 1961, Gavin Young, further noted that the Nagas were a people of Mongoloid origin, most of whom inhabited the mountainous Naga Hills and Tuensang areas that fringe the Indo-Burmese border. He described the Nagas as stocky, muscular and cheerful, while also being formidable warriors and reputed head-hunters. They had nothing in common with India culturally, racially or linguistically, and were probably most closely related to the Dyaks of Borneo and Philippines tribes.”²⁰

Despite the myriad of theories surrounding the racial origin of the Nagas, it is still open to debate today. Different tribes have their own versions of their origin and related myths. Though most scholars speculate that the Nagas were among the Mongoloid groups who had migrated from China and Mongolia to South East Asia and South Asia at different times and stages,²¹ another account records that the Nagas migrated from different directions across the mountains by the last centuries BC, perhaps from the area of modern Yunnan through Upper Burma and Assam.²²

G. E. Gerini in his book *Researches on Ptolemy's Geography of East Asia* has charted maps on the basis of Claudius Ptolemy's²³ description showing *Nangalogai* in AD 2, to be in the areas where the Nagas are presently settled.²⁴ Moreover, O. K. Singh also argues that the discovery of pre-historic cave sites and other archaeological relics in Naga areas represent relics of the Palaeolithic culture which have no affinity with the rest of mainland India; it is

¹⁹ Tajenyuba Ao, *British Occupation of Naga Country* (Mokokchung: Naga Literature Society, 1993), ii.

²⁰ Gavin young, *The Nagas: An Unknown War* (London: NNC, 1962), 8-9.

²¹ Yangkahao Vashum, *Christology in Context: A Tribal – Indigenous Appraisal of North East India* (New Delhi: Christian World Imprints, 2017), 28.

²² Najekhu Yepthomi, *Early History of the Nagas, in From Darkness to Light*, edited by Alongla P. Aier (Kohima: NBCC, 1997), 5.

²³ Claudius Ptolemy was a Greek mathematician, astronomer, geographer, astrologer and musician of Alexandria, Egypt.

²⁴ Home Raikhan, *Naga History: Through A Clan and Tribe* (Guwahati: Spectrum Publications, 2016), 114.

rather found to be more parallel with the islands of South East Asia which dates back around or before 10,000 BC.²⁵ Thus, there is no doubt that they have been living almost exclusively in their current location for many centuries. Their oral traditions go back at least 52 generations.²⁶

The word 'Naga' first occurred in the Buranjis – the official compiled chronicles of the Ahoms.²⁷ According to J. H. Hutton, the word is derived from the word 'naga,' which means 'mountaineer,' 'mountainous' or 'inaccessible place.' Other scholars are of the opinion that the word naga simply means 'people,' derived from the root word 'Nog' or 'Nor' – both meaning 'people' in the languages of some of the Eastern Naga tribes.²⁸ More precisely, 'Nok' or 'Noka' in the Naga Banfera Konyak language means 'people.'²⁹ According to Mowu Gwizan, the term is derived from the Chinese word 'Natcha' because the Chinese call the Nagas 'Natcharemi' which means 'Naga people.' Still another view which has been widely accepted is that it originated from the Burmese word 'Naka' which means 'perforated ears.'³⁰ This is due to the fact that both the females and males of some of the Naga tribes such as Ao and Konyak get their ears pierced from a very young age.

TRADITIONAL SOURCES

J. H. Hutton recorded the account of the Angami, Lotha and Sema tribes; they share the common legend, which centres around the Khezhakeno legendary stone. According to this legend, an old couple lived with their three sons in a village. Every day they would spread paddy to dry upon a great flat stone, and at dusk, they would find that a single load had become two loads. This was because the stone was inhabited by a spirit. The three sons took turns to spread their paddy on this stone but one day, they quarrelled bitterly as to whose turn it was.

²⁵ Vashum, *Christology in Context*, 30-31.

²⁶ Hattaway, *From Headhunters to Church Planters*, 3.

²⁷ The Ahom or Tai-Ahom is a tribe of Assam and Arunachal Pradesh, descendants of the Tai people, who migrated to the Brahmaputra Valley in Assam in 1228.

²⁸ M. Horam, *Naga Polity*, (Delhi: B. R. Publishing Corporation, 1975), 21-23.

²⁹ B. R. Ghosh, *Mokokchung District Gazetteer Nagaland* (Kohima: Government of Nagaland, 1979), 23.

³⁰ V. K. Nuh, *The origin of Naga: The Khezhakeno legendary stone* (Kohima: Vision Press, 2002), 9.

Thus, the parents, fearing bloodshed, broke eggs on the stone, and set the whole stone on fire. The stone suddenly burst with a crack which sounded like thunder, and the virtue of the stone departed. The three sons then separated and went on to become the ancestors of the Angami, Lotha and Sema tribes.³¹

THE AO NAGA TRADITION

The Ao tribe maintains that they originated from Longtrok (six stones). Many other tribes also agree that the Ao tribe originated ahead of them and do not mention them in connection with Khezhakeno.³² It appears that the Ao tribe migrated through the same route followed by the other tribes, but the historical stones were the Longtrok instead of Khezhakeno.³³ Adjacent to the Longtrok, they first founded Chungliyimti village, where they settled and stayed for a considerable period of time. In the course of time, they crossed the Dikhu River by the Cane Bridge, leaving the other tribes behind, and thus came to be known as ‘Aor’ or ‘Ao’ which translates to ‘going’ or ‘gone.’³⁴

THE MAKHEL NAGA TRADITION

Some of the Naga tribes consider Makhel – a village located in the Mao area of Manipur – as the place of their origin. Naga tribes such as Sumi, Lotha, Ao, Angami, Tangkhul, Poumai, etc. are believed to exist after they departed from Makhel.³⁵ Tradition has it that all the Naga tribes gathered for a meeting at Shajouba village before their departure from Makhel. According to the legend of the Poumai Naga, a man named Pou left his walking stick erect on the ground after the meeting, before leaving for home. His walking stick then sprouted and took root inside the ground and grew into a wild pear tree (Tyaobe), which is still alive at

³¹ Ibid., vi.

³² Hokishe Sema, *Emergence of Nagaland: Social-economic and political transformation and the future* (New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House Pvt. Ltd., 1986), 6.

³³ Hokishe Sema, *Emergence of Nagaland*, 6.

³⁴ B. R. Ghosh, *Mokokchung District Gazetteer Nagaland*, 26.

³⁵ Angeline Lotsuro, *The Nagas: A Missionary Challenge* (Shillong: Vendrame Institute Publications, 2000), 6.

Shajouba, near Makhel. Regardless of whether this tree truly sprouted out of Pou's walking stick, it is believed to be planted during the Naga departure from Makhel. The Nagas call this pear the 'departure tree' since it marks their departure and it is still held in reverence by all the Nagas who migrated from Makhel.³⁶

SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL LIFE

Nagas are known for being simple, cheerful, honest, courteous and hospitable people. They are regarded as industrious and hardworking and have a strong spirit of self-help and self-reliance.³⁷ Verrier Elwin states that:

The basic interest of every Naga is his family, the clan, the khel (part of a village), the village. This is what he regards as his culture, which must not be interfered with. He is passionately attracted to his land, his system of land tenure, the arrangements for the government of his village, the organizations of cultivation, the administration of tribal justice through the village and tribal courts.³⁸

Thus, it is evident that there is strong communal identity inherent in Naga cultural life.

The Nagas do not possess any form of written literature to call their own. Tradition has it that there was a time when the Nagas did have their own script and literature, which was recorded on the skin of an animal. However, due to the carelessness on the part of a scribe while handling the scroll, a dog devoured the skin, which contained the entire script. In this way, the Nagas lost their literature.³⁹ A tradition serves its own purpose in some way; but as far as authentic history goes, the Nagas have no written literature.⁴⁰ This legend has been circulated among the Nagas as an oral legend from generation to generation. According to Philologists, the Naga dialect belongs to the Tibeto-Burman linguistic group, and each tribe

³⁶ R. B. Thohe Pou, http://www.epao.net/epSubPageExtractor.asp?src=manipur.Ethnic_Races_Manipur.The_Myths_of_Naga_Origin (accessed on March 21, 2020).

³⁷ Najekhu Yephthomi, Early History of the Nagas, in *From Darkness to Light*, edited by Alongla P. Aier, (Kohima: NBCC, 1997), 13.

³⁸ Murkot Ramunny, *The Worlds of Nagas*, (New Delhi: Northern Book Centre, 1988), 20.

³⁹ Mayangnokcha, *Impur School Souvenir of the 1895 Platinum Jubilee 1970* (Impur: Clark Memorial Institute, 1970), 11.

⁴⁰ R. Lisen Ao, *Collection of stray records of the American Baptist Mission's work in Naga hills 1836-1936* (Mokokchung: R. Lisen Ao, 1987), 94-95.

has its own dialect with common roots. The Nagas have adopted the Roman script brought by the American missionaries in the nineteenth century.

Since the physiography of Nagaland is mountainous for the most part, it gave way to the distinctness of each tribe in language, culture and dress. Each Naga tribe boasts of its unique dialects which are unintelligible to its neighbouring tribes.⁴¹ It is interesting to note that even within a tribe, there exists more than one dialect. For instance, the Ao tribe possesses two major dialects – Chungli and Mongsen, which are substantially different from each other. Another example is the Chakhesang tribe which also possesses two major dialects – Chokri and Khezha, which are also very unlike the other.

The credit for the introduction of systematically writing the Naga languages, on a large scale, goes to the Baptist missionaries who came from America. Rev. Miles Bronson, the first missionary to the Nagas, who worked among the Singphos and Namsang Nagas, wrote two books. One was a Naga vocabulary book and the other was called ‘Natahema Heran Kabanva Nyapran’ in the Namseng dialect. These were the first books which had been written in a Naga language.⁴² These books were printed at the Jaipur American Mission Press in 1840.⁴³

With the passage of time, the Nagas have developed a language which has been christened ‘Nagamese’ by the Naga people. It is a mixture of Hindi, Assamese, Sanskrit, Bengali and Nepali in unequal measures. It has been several decades now since the Nagas have been communicating with one another in Nagamese as a means of common communication. Nagamese is also spoken by the non-Nagas who reside within Nagaland. However, ever since Nagaland became a constituent state of the Indian union, English has been declared as the

⁴¹ P. T. Philip, *The growth of Baptist churches in Nagaland* (Guwahati: CLC, 1983), 9.

⁴² Renthly Keitzar, *The triumph of faith in Nagaland* (Kohima: NBCC, 1987), 1.

⁴³ Puthuvail Thomas Philip, *The Growth of Baptist Churches in Nagaland* (Guwahati: Christian Literature Centre, 1976), 9.

official language of the state. Apart from the vernacular schools, particularly in the lower classes, English is the medium of instruction in all the schools and colleges of Nagaland.⁴⁴

RELIGION

Religion would mean living in the spontaneous awareness of, an encounter with, acknowledgement of, and most importantly, obedience to the active reality of the presence of the Supreme Being; truly, religion permeates all aspects of life.⁴⁵ Contrary to what non-Naga writers have written about the religion of the Nagas during the early part of the twentieth century, Nagas did not merely believe in spirits and deities. Most Nagas believed in the existence of a Supreme Being or High God; thus, Nagas were primarily monotheistic. For instance, the Ao Nagas believed in a Supreme God who was known as Lungkitsungba (the God of heaven and the dispenser of everything), Lijaba (the Creator of the world) and Meyutsungba (the God of judgement). These three different names given to God did not represent three different Gods but were rather attributes given to the Supreme Being.⁴⁶

Many Naga scholars are of the view that labelling Nagas as animistic was because the West considered Nagas as industrially backward and inferior to them; also, perhaps they considered the Naga religion as inferior to Judaism, Christianity, Islam, etc. Refuting the popular understanding of tribal religions, including the Naga religion, Wati Longchar writes:

The whole concept of religion is preconditioned by popular developmental ideology. Therefore, it undoubtedly creates a sense of inferiority in those who have faith in tribal religion. Material backwardness is taken, as a yardstick to mean that tribal religion is underdeveloped and primitive. That is why many writers have reduced the traditional tribal religion and culture to the status of mere preparito evangelii. This is wrong understanding of the tribal religion.⁴⁷

Similarly, Renthly Keitzar also defends the traditional tribal religion, particularly of North East India:

⁴⁴ Ashikho Daili Mao, *Nagas: Problems and Politics* (New Delhi: Ashish Publishing House, 1992), 8.

⁴⁵ A. Wati Longchar, *The traditional tribal worldview and modernity* (Jorhat: N. Limala Lkr, 1995), 5.

⁴⁶ Takatemjen, *Studies on Theology and Naga Culture* (Mokokchung: The Author, 1997), 41-42.

⁴⁷ A. Wati Longchar, *The traditional tribal worldview and modernity* (Jorhat: N. Limala Lkr, 1995), 9-11.

For most people of North East India, belief in a Supreme Being or High God is a distinctive feature. He is the Creator and Sustainer of humans and of the whole creation and believed to be loving and benevolent in contrast to malevolent spirits. Besides their belief in the Supreme Being, they also believe in many deities and spirits, which are, however, local and secondary. The Supreme Being or High God is sometimes identified with natural objects, but often personified, like the Sun, Moon or Earth. The Supreme Being or High God is worshipped by them and offerings are given in thanksgiving for blessings in the family and for great harvest. They hope in him for protection and deliverance from evil spirits. And life does not end in death, but it continues to live on in the land of death. Hence, the traditional/tribal religion has an idea of life hereafter.⁴⁸

Thus, from a close study of the tribal religions, we can ascertain that certain traditional religious ideas such as the concept of the Supreme God, spirits, relationship of humans and animals, the world around them, and ethical values are well-developed. Hence, tribal religions, including the traditional religion of the Nagas cannot be labelled as animistic or primitive.⁴⁹ Furthermore, the traditional tribal religion of North East India is a distinctive religion having all the phenomenological aspects of a true religion.⁵⁰

THE SOCIO-POLITICAL LIFE

Basically, the structure of the Naga society was and is rural in character. The Nagas generally settle down and build villages at the summit of a hill or on the ridge of a high sloping range. There were certain important factors taken into consideration during the process of selecting a village site by the Naga. The first was from the Naga warfare point of view; the village would need to be located in a place where it was highly defensible. This was because the Naga villages were in constant war with each other. Secondly, the village would have to be in a site where water – such as a natural freshwater spring – was both available in plenty and easily accessible.⁵¹

⁴⁸ Renthly Keitzar, 'Developing a contextual theology for North East India' in *Contextual Theological Education* (Delhi: ISPCK, 1993), 28-29.

⁴⁹ Longchar, *Tribal worldview*, 12.

⁵⁰ Renthly Keitzar, *In search of a relevant gospel message* (Guwahati: CLC, 1995), 73-75.

⁵¹ Philip, *Growth*, 45.

Ideally, each Naga village was surrounded by trees, light jungles and bamboo clumps so that it would not be exposed or visible to the enemy villages. Further, the approach to the villages were narrow, steep and paved with stones, and well-fortified with walls and gates.⁵² They were also guarded night and day by regular watchmen in shifts in order to warn the village about any unforeseen dangers.⁵³ Normally, the various Naga tribes remained at perpetual hostility to each other and deadly feuds took place generation after generation; sometimes, however, they would join hands for a higher purpose such as fighting a common and stronger enemy.⁵⁴ It was this tense situation that the British walked into, when they entered the Naga country in 1832.⁵⁵

Before the advent of Christianity in the Naga Hills, every Naga village was not only a religious unit but also a politically and economically distinct unit, enjoying autonomy. Among the Ao Nagas, the village is the largest unit which holds all the villagers together by social, political and religious bonds. However, among the Angamis, although the village is regarded as the unit of political and religious aspects of the villagers, the ultimate unit of the social aspect is the clan.⁵⁶ Thus, both the clan and the village were very significant in the functioning of the village and tribe.

In the matters of village polity, there exists a variation of customs among the different Naga tribes. For some tribes, there is a lord over every aspect of the village, and this position is hereditary. However, in the Ao and Tangkhul tribes, the actual power is vested in the Village Council, a body of village elders drawn from the different clans residing in the village, who in

⁵² Ibid., 28.

⁵³ Nuklu Longkumer, *The growth of Baptist churches among the Aos of Nagaland* (Changtongya: Changtongya Baptist Church, 1988), 7.

⁵⁴ V. K. Anand, *Nagaland in transition* (New Delhi: APH, 1967), 19-20.

⁵⁵ Horam, *Naga Polity*, 61.

⁵⁶ J. H. Hutton, *The Angami Nagas* (Mac Millan and Company, 1921), 109.

turn represent the principle kindred in the village. For most Naga tribes, the clan was regarded as the rallying point among them.⁵⁷

Commenting on the socio-political life of the Nagas, Puthenpurakal states,

First, a Naga by nature is one who is ever eager to know things. It is for this, that he discusses a problem first at home, then at the level of his clan, then in the meetings of the representatives of his entire tribe. At each level, anyone present has full freedom to express his views and to ask questions. It is not uncommon to find the head of a clan, besides the meetings fixed at regular intervals, calling emergency meetings to handle an issue important to his clan.⁵⁸

Every Naga knows that all discussions should lead to some conclusions, and once a decision is arrived at, a Naga is ready to obey it since he has great respect for his village elders and tribal chieftains.⁵⁹

To sum up, the Naga society is patrilineal and lineage is a political unit; many such small political units constitute the larger community, which shares a common territory. A head is chosen by each unit for representation in the village council which looks after the affairs of the village. Thus, in the political system of the Nagas, the primary loyalties are centred on lineage and tribe. Usually, the Naga tribes and villages remained at constant war with each other; however, sometimes they united to fight a common enemy,⁶⁰ such as the British or the Indian army.

THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL LIFE OF THE PEOPLE

Nagas have been known for being simple, cheerful, honest, courteous and hospitable people. They are regarded as industrious and hardworking, and have a strong spirit of self-help and self-reliance.⁶¹ One of the most important aspects of Naga life is that each tribe has its own area of land which is practically and morally owned by the particular tribe. No other tribe

⁵⁷ M. Horam, *North East India: A Profile* (New Delhi: Cosmo Publications, 1990), 165-166.

⁵⁸ Joseph Puthenpurakal, *Baptist Missions in Nagaland* (Shillong: Vendrame Missiological Institute, 1984), 5.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 6.

⁶⁰ Anand, *Nagaland in Transition*, 20.

⁶¹ Yephthomi, *Early History of the Nagas in From Darkness to Light*, 13.

encroached the land of another's tribe nor could it be sold. The hard-working Naga was self-sufficient, and they lived a satisfied life, and desired less material possessions.⁶²

The reports from Upper Assam to Edward Hay on 6th February, 1794, states, "From the Southern confines, Nagas supply cotton, luckibilla (a silk cloth), toat bund (a silk cloth), nakapore (an embroidered silk), red hair and nagazatee spears."⁶³ The Nagas would produce everything they needed by themselves; theirs was a self-sufficient village economy. They were very efficient in iron and artistic work; they made beautiful pottery without the use of the potter's wheel and possessed an extraordinary skill in bamboo work.⁶⁴ Nagas were also known for their truthfulness and honesty. In the early days, many British officers had implicit faith in the Nagas and commonly said, "Nagas never lie." They were so trustworthy that among many tribes, the granaries were constructed outside the houses or even outside the village.⁶⁵ But the granaries were never looted as thieves did not exist. A western ethnographer once commented about the Lotha Nagas in the following manner: "Though the tribe contains a few habitual criminals, on the whole, they are very honest. Petty theft is rare, and a man can leave his spear and cloth by the side of a village path knowing that he will find his property untouched when he comes to pick it up on his way home."⁶⁶

Unlike the other societies in India, the Naga society is an absolutely casteless society and lives a communitarian life.⁶⁷ The village identity occupies the most significant position in respect of every tribe in Naga society and culture; the person's identity is his/her tribe or village. The Naga villages are homogenous, self-sustaining and independent. They are distinct

⁶² Ramunny, *The Worlds of Nagas*, 5-6.

⁶³ Home Raikhan, *Naga History: Through a Clan and Tribe* (Guwahati: Spectrum Publications, 2016), 115.

⁶⁴ Ramunny, *The Worlds of Nagas*, 20.

⁶⁵ Yepthomi, 'Early History of the Nagas' in *From Darkness to Light*, 7.

⁶⁶ J. P. Mills, *The Lotha Nagas: With an Introduction and Supplementary Notes by J. Hutton* (London: Macmillan and Co. Ltd., 1922), 19.

⁶⁷ Talitemjen Jamir and A. Lanunungsang, *Naga Society and Culture: A Case Study of the Ao Naga Society and Culture* (Nagaland: Nagaland University Tribal Research Centre, 2005), 15.

in terms of village administration, distribution of clans, socio-cultural institutions, and are democratic in their nature and practise. Each village forms a distinct, tiny republic which is conducive to the happiness and freedom of the people and the social cohesion and stability. Considering the significance of their traditional institutions and customary practises, and in order to preserve them, the constitution of India made a special provision for the state of Nagaland by enacting a unique article for the Nagas, namely, Article 371 (A).⁶⁸ In general, this article provides special privileges to Nagaland in terms of religious or social practises of the Nagas, Naga customary law and procedure, administration of civil and criminal justice involving decisions according to Naga customary law, and ownership and transfer of land and its resources. This article signifies the protection of the people, land and resources of Nagaland under the Indian constitution.

The villagers of Nagaland in the early days were mostly confined to the village. They were content with the limited resources available within the village and the surrounding areas. There existed no inter-village roads and there was lack of communication outside the village. Thus, one village would seldom come into contact with the people of another village. Moreover, the ranges and valleys covered with green and thick forests, filled with ferocious animals and wild beasts, made contact with the outside world neigh impossible.⁶⁹

HEADHUNTING

Paul Hattaway is of the view that many westerners wrongly assume that head-hunting among the pre-Christian Nagas was merely a matter of violence and murder; he states that it was much more – “it was something noble to be admired, a proof of bravery and strength.”⁷⁰

⁶⁸ Ibid., 37-38.

⁶⁹ Vesito Venuh, *The advent of Christianity and its impact on Phek village* (B.D. thesis, Senate of Serampore college, 2009), 30.

⁷⁰ Hattaway, *From head-hunters to church planters*, 4.

Naga historian Joseph Thong also alludes that the practise of head-hunting was “at the heart and soul of the Naga culture, around which the rest of the life activities are interwoven.”⁷¹

Head-hunting and raids among the Nagas also formed an essential part of their funerary and agricultural rituals. Hodson refused to reduce head-hunting to a single formula as he discovered that it was connected with blood feuds, agrarian rites, funerary rites and eschatological beliefs.⁷² He further observed that the heads taken were believed to be the slaves of the chief in the afterlife, and stated, “I see a double motive at work, affection and respect for the dead as well as fear, not only of mortal contagiosity, but also of malignant ghostly activity. It may be peculiar and propitiatory, intended both to placate the powerful ghost and to prevent danger.”⁷³ According to a native, he was informed that the possession of a head brought wealth and prosperity to the village.⁷⁴

When the British gained control of Naga territory, their plans to stop headhunting was unsuccessful. This practise began to subside only after the gospel took hold, and Naga Christians learned the value that God places on human life.⁷⁵ According to Joseph Thong:

The American Baptist missionaries played a vital role in bringing the head-hunting culture to an end, by convincing their converts that head-hunting is a sin and against morality. God, the Creator of man and the universe, will punish those who murder their fellow men. Therefore, all who embraced Christianity automatically stopped head-hunting raids.⁷⁶

Thus, it is evident that even though head-hunting was common and highly regarded among the Naga tribes, the coming of the American missionaries put an end to it once and for all.

⁷¹ Joseph S. Thong, *Head-hunters culture: Historic culture of Naga* (Tseminyu, Nagaland: Joseph S. Thong, 1997), ii.

⁷² T. C. Hodson, *Head-hunting among the hill tribes of Assam* (Folklore: Volume 20. No.2, 1909), 143.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 136-137.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 138.

⁷⁵ Hattaway, *From head-hunters to church planters*, 7.

⁷⁶ Thong, *Head-hunters culture*, 17-18.

NAGA WOMEN

Malcolm Cairns asserts that warfare, head-hunting and protection of women were key elements of Naga masculinity.⁷⁷ Some of the Naga tribes even accorded particular honour to warriors who returned home with the heads of women and children, as they were protected in the heart of the village.⁷⁸ Mary Clark stated, “There is no degradation of the women among the Nagas.”⁷⁹ The women missionaries agreed that women moved freely and played a different role in hill society than on the plains. While thrilled with the ease of meeting and conversing with Naga women, the missionaries were horrified with their nakedness, sexuality and “performance of femininity.”⁸⁰ Mary Clark also mentioned about women who “instigated” the men to engage in headhunting. Women in Nagaland as mothers were respected and given the task to take care of the household. Different tribes have different obligation and rules today for the status of women.

CONCLUSION

Nagaland may be a small state with a population of nineteen hundred thousand people, but its rich culture and beautiful location contribute to its appeal as an attractive state in the North East of India. The headings covered in this chapter are brief and informative, but does not do justice to its obscure history or the vibe of the state. The land and its people are in a state of harmony with nature, which brings out the vibrant colours of Nagaland in every aspect. While historical sources on its origin are scarce, the few are authentic to solidify the importance of the Nagas, both as a people and for the country of India.

⁷⁷ Malcolm Cairns, *The Alder Managers: The cultural ecology of a village in Nagaland, N.E. India* (Australian National University: Ph.D. Thesis, 2007), 181.

⁷⁸ Hattaway, *From head-hunters to church planters*, 5-6.

⁷⁹ Mary Mead Clark, *A corner in India*, 49.

⁸⁰ Suryasikha Pathak, *Less freedom equals emancipation: Femininity and sexuality in colonial northeast India* (Philadelphia: Paper presented at Association of Asian Studies Conference, March 2014).

CHAPTER 2

THE ADVENT OF CHRISTIANITY AND THE INDO-NAGA WAR

INTRODUCTION

This chapter highlights how the gospel of Jesus Christ was introduced to the people of Nagaland by the tireless efforts of the American Baptist Missionaries. The work of major characters such as Edward Winter Clark and Miles Bronson will be discussed. To preach to people who were then head-hunters is no mean feat and it is a miracle that so much was accomplished over such a short period of time. The missionaries also brought along education, sanitization and advancement as a bonus along with them. The work of the Indigenous Missionary Godhula will also be discussed.

The chapter further sheds light on the history behind how the British encountered Nagas and utilized their services during the World Wars I and II. The plight of the Nagas after India gained independence from the British rule is also explained here. In their quest for freedom, the formation of the Naga freedom fighters has also been detailed. Lastly, the tragedy of the sufferings under the Indian government has been described.

BACKGROUND OF BAPTIST MISSION WORK IN INDIA

The first contact of the British with the Nagas was in 1832, when the British illegally entered the Angami Naga region with the help of 700 Manipuri¹ troops and 800 forced Manipuri laborers. They came under ferocious attack by the Angamis, who perceived any outsiders trespassing on their land as a serious threat to their freedom and sovereignty. Consequently, several raids between the Nagas and the British occurred during the period

¹ People who belong to Manipur, a state in North East India.

1839-1850; this was also met with fierce and heroic resistance from the Nagas. With the advent of the British to the Naga Hills, the Nagas were gradually exposed to the outside world. After finally overcoming the Angami in this area, the British introduced western education, Christianity, health services and a general system of administration.²

To understand the growth of Christianity in North East India, it is vital to know the early contact of the Baptist mission in the northeast part of India. Torbert, the Baptist historian, labels the years from 1833 to 1837 as “a notable period in the history of America Baptist Mission”. This was a period of increasing enthusiasm for missionary work in which their involvement began to move beyond the borders of Burma to other parts of Asia, including neighbouring India.³

William Carey with his coadjutors, Jasua Marshman (1768 – 1837) and William Ward (1769 – 1833), established Serampore Mission in India as a branch of the English Baptist Mission in January 1800. In a pamphlet, *An Enquiry into the Obligations of the Christians to use means for the conversion of Heathens*, Carey emphasis the necessity of converting the heathens to useful members of society, and how they should be reached out to only in their native language. During 1801- 32, he translated the Bible into Bengali and forty other languages including one in Assamese. Krishna Pal, Carey’s earliest convert (1800) was deputed to North East India for the spread of the gospel. From his headquarters at Pandua, in the district of Sylhet, Pal carried on his mission and by 1813 he is said to have seven converts.⁴

There was a desire among the different denominations in America to form a common bond on a national level by the 1800s. It was the first sign of a countrywide cooperation.

² Purtongzuk Longchar, *Historical development of the Ao Nagas in Nagaland* (Dimapur: Print Home, 2002), 15.

³ Narola Imchen, *Remembering our Foremothers*, (Jorhat: Women Study Department Eastern Theological College, 2003), 112.

⁴ H.K. Barpujari, *The American Missionaries and North-East India* (1836- 1900 A.D) (Guwahati: Spectrum Publications, 1985), 10.

Puthenpurakal alludes that we here limit ourselves to the formation in 1810 of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions organized by the Congregationalists and the Presbyterians, to which the Baptists too contribute. On Thursday, 6 February 1812, the Board held a historic service at Salem to set apart Messer Adoniram Judson, Samuel Newell, Samuel Nott and Gordon Hall “for the sake of Christ and the promotion of His Kingdom” in some “Asiatic field.”⁵

Judson and the others, after arriving in Calcutta, India, were guests of the British Baptists for Baptism by Immersion; here, they came to the conviction that the New Testament Baptism ought to be only by immersion. Consequently, they were immersed in the Baptistry of Carey’s Calcutta Lal Bazar Chapel on 6 September 1812 with the Rev. William Ward performing the Ordinance. The Judsons became the first two American Baptists in India.⁶ But because of the war that broke out between England and America in 1812, the new missionaries in Calcutta were ordered by the English to either return to America or face trouble by the English. So, they decided to leave for Burma to look for Felix Carey, the son of William Carey, who was doing mission work in Rangoon.⁷

THE FIRST CONTACT OF THE GOSPEL TO THE NAGAS

When the political administration of Assam, India, was taken over by the British after 1826, the colonial rulers felt the need of missionary influence to serve their imperialistic interests. Henceforth the Cross followed the Flag in Assam.⁸ Francis Jenkins, the British government agent of Assam invited the American Baptists to Assam.⁹ Two American Baptist

⁵ Joseph Puthenpurakal, *Baptist Missions in Nagaland: A study in Historical and Ecumenical Perspective* (Calcutta: Vendrame Missiological Institute, 1984), 48.

⁶ Ibid., 3.

⁷ Ibid., 49.

⁸ V.K Nuh, *165 years history of Naga Baptists Churches* (Kohima: MEK Computers, 2006), 49.

⁹ Joshua Lorin, *Naga Christianity: The Baptists in the formative years, 1838-1915* (Ph.D. diss., Fuller Theological Seminary, 2014), 20.

Missionary couples came to Sadiya (Upper Assam) on 23 May 1836; they were Mr. and Mrs. Brown and Mr. and Mrs. Oliver Cutter. On 17 July 1837, they were joined by Mr. and Mrs. Miles Bronson and Mrs. Jacob Thomas.¹⁰

The years from 1833-1837 have rightly been called a notable period in the history of Baptist Mission in America. By 1835, the missionary enthusiasm of American Baptist had reached a new peak. The mission among the Siamese, in Bangkok, was established in 1833; among the Telugus of South India in 1840; and the “Mission to the Shans” in Assam in 1836. The first American Baptist Mission Stations in North East India were not established for the purpose of evangelizing the people of the area but as a strategic outpost in a campaign to evangelize the Shan tribes of Northern Burma and Southern China.¹¹

Most Naga people credit and recognize Edward Winter Clark to be the first pioneer missionary who brought the gospel to Nagaland because of the failure of the mission work of Miles Bronson who was the first missionary to set foot on Naga soil. However, it is important to give credit where it is due whether it was successful or not. Mary Mead Clark, the wife of E.W. Clark, also claims Miles Bronson to be the first missionary to the Nagas by reporting that:

Rev. Miles Bronson first began work among the Singphos and Nagas (1838-1841). He prepared a spelling book for each for these people, also a catechism in the Naga language. He went into the hills with his family, but was obliged, after a few months, to leave on account of illness, lack of suitable food, and accommodations. An old chief came, bringing his sons, and said: “Go, get well, come again, but by your return I shall be gone. My hair is ripe, yet here my sons, who will stand pledged to be your friends.”¹²

Miles Bronson, who was one of the pioneer missionaries in Assam,¹³ is revered as the “the Apostle to Assam” and is considered as one of the greatest Baptist missionaries to have served anywhere in the world. Bronson was born in Norway, New York (1812-1883). The year

¹⁰ Joseph Puthenpurakal, *Baptist Missions in Nagaland: A study in Historical and Ecumenical Perspective*, 50.

¹¹ V.K Nuh, *165 years history of Naga Baptists Churches*, 40-51.

¹² Mary Mead Clark, *A Corner in India* (Philadelphia: America Baptist Publication Society, 1907), 5.

¹³ Assam is a state of India in North-east India, situated south of the eastern Himalayas and a neighboring state of Nagaland.

1836 was a significant year for Bronson. He earned his theological degree from Hamilton Literary and Theological Institution (Colgate University), was ordained and appointed as a missionary, and married to Ruth Montage Lucas.¹⁴ Bronson was sent as a reinforcement to labor among the Singphos in the extreme northeast part of Assam. He was only 24 years old when he came to India with his new bride Ruth Montague Lucas.¹⁵

Bronson made a long visit of three weeks from 7- 29 January 1839 to the Namsang¹⁶ Nagas. He met two sons of the Namsang village chief along with his warriors. He spent the whole day there trying to convince the Nagas that he was “no spy of the company, and that he had come to give them books in their own language, so that they might read the law of God, and become a wise and good people.”¹⁷ Bronson expressed his first impression of the Naga people: “They (Nagas) doubtless wish to be better assured of my intentions, and the object of the visit, before they admit me to their villages...They have allowed no one to know much of the interior of their country.”¹⁸ Bronson then expressed his intention of coming to the Naga Hills for the gospel:

I Bronson was a teacher of God Holy Savior of which they (Nagas) were entirely ignorant, I told them and that I had heard of them in my native land. And had come across the great waters to give them books in their own language, that they might read the law of God, and become a wise and good people.¹⁹

Bronson was a brilliant linguist, who wrote the Naga vocabulary and a catechism before even setting his foot on Naga soil, Bronson was of the conviction that:

If they (Nagas) will receive books and allow their children to be gathered... (and). instructed...the gospel will work its way into the very midst of their country. A successful

¹⁴ Joshua Lorin, *Naga Christianity*, 24.

¹⁵ V.K Nuh, *165 years history of Naga Baptists Churches*, 51.

¹⁶ A Naga village above Jaipur and presently under the Tirap District of Arunachal Pradesh (present day). Note, this was before when Nagaland was a sovereign nation and before it was divided and integrated with India and Burma.

¹⁷ Joseph Puthenpurakal, *Baptist Missions in Nagaland: A study in Historical and Ecumenical Perspective*, 51.

¹⁸ Joshua Lorin, *Naga Christianity*, 29.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 30.

beginning here will open the door to twenty-one other dependent villages where the same dialect is spoken.²⁰

In 1840, Bronson wrote a first reader in the Konyak Naga language which was the first book ever written in any Naga language. The name of the book was, “Natahema Heran Kabanva Nya Pran.” He also translated the “History of creation and “The Flood.” A beginning was also made on the Gospel of St. Matthew. Attempts were also made on Naga terms and phrases through the Assamese languages. He wrote a Noga (Naga) Vocabulary and Catechism. Bronson also established a school at Namsang which soon had 20 students. Bronson’s sister Rhoda Bronson taught briefly in this school with Mrs. Bronson, who remarks in her journal about her students, “Who are as wild and untamed as the partridge on the mountains. The noise of a deer, or the baying of their hounds, frequently calls their attention from their books, and they are off instantly, without waiting to signify their wish to go, or to ask permission.”²¹

Bronson started to preach in the presence of the village chiefs about the love of God and eternal life in heaven. The first Naga convert was Hube, a Konyak Naga; he was baptized on September 12, 1847, but he died a few weeks later on October 10.²² The second Naga to receive Christ was Longjanglepzuk, who was also known as Lungsang Francis Wayland, an Ao Naga from the village of Merangkong. He was baptized by Rev. S.W. Whiting on September 7, 1851.²³ The third to receive baptism was Yahukonsi Sarah Caldwell who was baptized in 1852 and became a member of the Nowgong Church. In 1855, two more Konyak Naga men were baptized, named Aklong and Amlai from the village of Namsang by Dr. Brown at Sibsagar.²⁴ Most of the early Naga converts were killed because of their new beliefs, and

²⁰ Joshua Lorin, *Naga Christianity*, 32.

²¹ V.K Nuh, *165 years history of Naga Baptists Churches*, 54.

²² Paul Hattaway, *From Head-hunters to Church Planters*, 12.

²³ Puthuvail Thomas Philip, *The Growth of Baptist Churches in Nagaland* (Guwahati: Christian Literature Centre, 1976), 50; Mary Mead Clark, *A Corner in India* (Philadelphia: America Baptist Publication Society, 1907), 5.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 51.

some died in the clan wars. Mary Mead Clark states that “These were the works done toward giving the gospel previous to the undertaking of Mr. Clark.”²⁵

However, their work on the Naga hills were drawn back as the Barkers who came to work with the Nagas changed their mind in favor of Assam, Miss Rhoda Bronson became ill and died on 8 December 1840, and Browns and Cutters were convinced that the work among the Nagas was not worth all that trouble as opposed to the possible future harvest among the people of Assam.²⁶ The mission work of Bronson came to an end and the gospel mission work did not grow until the coming of the American Missionary Edward Winter Clark and Mary Mead Clark in 1872 to Assam, India.

EDWARD WINTER CLARK’S EARLY LIFE

Edward winter Clark was born on a cold winter day on February 25, 1830, in the town of North East, New York to Perry Clark and Caroline Winchell. His middle name was in honor of their pastor Rev. Thomas Winter.²⁷ Perry Clark (1901-1838) came from a rich family in which his grandfather Ezra Clark was a prosperous farmer with eight hundred acres of farmland. Caroline Winchell’s (1804-1863) family were among the first settlers of North East. The Winchell family had strong Baptist roots and spent much of their wealth to support the Baptist Church and in education.²⁸

Clark’s father died early; his mother and grandmother raised him up. His maternal grandmother played an influential role in his life. He was home-schooled by his mother and grandmother. He then attended grade school in the district schoolhouse on Downey Road in

²⁵ Mary Mead Clark, *A Corner in India*, 5.

²⁶ Joseph Puthenpurakal, *Baptist Missions in Nagaland: A study in Historical and Ecumenical Perspective*, 52-53.

²⁷ Narola Ao McFayden, *Travelling in Time with Pioneers of our Faith: Edward Winter and Mary Mead Clark* (North Charleston, SC: CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2016), 2.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 3.

North East, New York, then Worcester Academy in Worcester, Massachusetts.²⁹ He received his Master of Arts degree with honors from Brown University in Rhode Island in 1857³⁰ and he attended Newton Theological Seminary in Massachusetts for another Master's degree from 1857- 1858. Brown University honored him with a Doctor of Divinity degree in 1901.³¹

Clark grew up in an era in which missionary work was rampant across the globe. Several American missionaries were revived during this time and committed their lives to spread the gospel across the globe. Clark attended a month of Revival meeting and was baptized at North East Baptist Church, North East, New York, on Nov 19, 1843. However, Rev. James B. Simmons³² writes, "This eminent servant of Christ had in his youth an awful controversy with God against entering into Ministry." Thus, Clark resisted his call to ministry. But, "a startling providence brought him to his senses... He laid his money on God's altar. Then he laid himself there."³³

Clark got married to Mary Jane Mead on September 29, 1858. Mary Mead was born in July 1832 at Amenia, New York.³⁴ Her parents were pillars of the Baptist Church in Amenia.³⁵ Mary attended grade school at Perry's Corner and later attended Amenia Seminary. Amenia Seminary was the first coeducational boarding school in the area. It was established in 1835 by a group of sagacious men of the Methodist faith.³⁶ Mary played a vital role in Edward's ministry in the later years. The seminary which she attended was spirit-filled, where the

²⁹ Ibid., 3.

³⁰ Ibid., 4.

³¹ Ibid., 5.

³² Simmon was Clark's childhood friend.

³³ Ibid., 5.

³⁴ Narola Imchen, "Women in Ao Naga Society: The Nineteenth Century Missionary Evaluation by Mary Mead Clark" (paper presented at the International Conference on Baptist Studies VIII, at Baylor University, Waco, Texas, July 18-21, 2018)

³⁵ Narola Ao McFayden, *Travelling in Time with Pioneers of our Faith: Edward Winter and Mary Mead Clark*, 6.

³⁶ Joel Benton, *Amenia Seminary Reunion* (NY: Broadway publishing company, 1906), 17.

spirituality of the student was nurtured through morning and evening prayers.³⁷ Narola Imchen³⁸ identifies Mary as being influenced by the nineteenth century American Woman's movement, who played a vital role in the education of women.³⁹ She was a godly woman who taught some of the devotions to her faith community. When she sailed to India, this community mourned with deep sorrow that they were losing her but were delighted to learn of her works among the Nagas⁴⁰ through her letters.⁴¹

After his ordination, Clark and Mary moved to Logansport, Indiana, to serve as the pastor of the Second Baptist Church from 1858 to 1860.⁴² In 1861, Clark was called to be the editor and publisher of *The Witness*, a Baptist religion paper published in Indianapolis, Indiana. Carrie Mead Clark was their first daughter born on August 17, 1859; she woke up in eternity on May 28, 1863. Carrie was fondly remembered and missed by her parents. Marry recounted of their "angel in heaven" as she conversed with her Naga sisters in Molungyimsen⁴³ (Molung).⁴⁴

Clark received a call on May 29, 1866 to be a missionary to India. Mary always had a sense of being a missionary since her childhood. Her sense of calling was made clear to her by her husband's call to be a missionary in India. Rev. W. E. Witter named Mary when she accepted their calling joyfully as a "Woman who for intelligence, grace and friendship-winning power could easily have met all the requirements incident to the White House at Washington

³⁷ Narola Ao McFayden, *Travelling in Time with Pioneers of our Faith: Edward Winter and Mary Mead Clark*, 8.

³⁸ Narola Imchen is the first woman in India to get a Ph.D. in History of Christianity and is the Principal of Eastern Theological College, India.

³⁹ Narola Imchen, *Women in Ao Naga Society: The Nineteenth Century Missionary Evaluation by Mary Mead Clark* (paper presented at the international Conference on Baptist Studies VIII, at Baylor University, Waco, Texas, July 18-21, 2018).

⁴⁰ More details about the Nagas shall be discussed later.

⁴¹ Narola Ao McFayden, *Travelling in Time with Pioneers of our Faith: Edward Winter and Mary Mead Clark*, 8.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 8.

⁴³ The first Christian village in Nagaland.

⁴⁴ McFayden, *Travelling in Time with Pioneers of our Faith*, 9-10.

with honor to America, had not the call of her life been for her to adorn a hut.” They prepared to leave for India; however, Mary became ill and Edward’s appointment was revoked on June 24, 1867 and reaffirmed on July 28, 1868. They were commissioned by the American Baptist Foreign Mission Board on 20 October 1868.⁴⁵

THE ENTRY OF EDWARD WINTER CLARK IN THE NAGA HILLS

Clark and Mary were commissioned by the American Baptist Foreign Mission Board on October 20, 1868 to India.⁴⁶ And in the same year, along with Mrs. Simons, a missionary returning to her husband in Burma, Mr. and Mrs. Clark left Boston in the bark “Pearl” a trading vessel of three hundred tons burden, bound for Calcutta via the Cape of Good Hope. It took them 160 days to reach Calcutta.⁴⁷ And from Calcutta they took a steamer which took two weeks via the Brahmaputra River to arrive at the southern bank of Sibsagor,⁴⁸ Assam. They reached Sibsagor Mission Station on March 30, 1869 by taking a pony and elephant ride.⁴⁹ They were appointed as missionaries in Sibsagor, India.

Clark was sent out as superintendent of the Mission Press and to take over the general mission work of Rev. W. Ward who was about to take a much-needed leave in America.⁵⁰ The Sibsagor Mission was a branch of the Assam Mission of the ABMU under the care of William Ward. Ward joined the Mission in 1861. Nidhi Levi, the first Assamese convert who was baptized by Rev. Miles, taught the Assamese language to Clark. And within a short span of time, he started translating and printing gospel tracts and materials for churches and schools.⁵¹

⁴⁵ Ibid., 11.

⁴⁶ Narola Ao McFayden, *Travelling in Time with Pioneers of our Faith*, 11.

⁴⁷ Mary Mead Clark, *A Corner in India*, 5-6.

⁴⁸ Sibsagor is a town in Assam in North-east India.

⁴⁹ Narola Ao McFayden, *Travelling in Time with Pioneers of our Faith*, 11.

⁵⁰ Mary Mead Clark, *A Corner in India*, 8.

⁵¹ Narola Ao McFayden, *Travelling in Time with Pioneers of our Faith: Edward Winter and Mary Mead Clark*, 13.

The Clarks arrived at Sibsagor in 1869 to work among the Assamese.⁵² Little did the Clarks know that, they were about to find their true calling in planting the seed of the gospel among the Nagas. Clark had native preachers in his team in the mission field. They played a vital role in the ministry of Clarks in the Sibsagor Mission. Nidhi Levi, Godhula, Lucy, Kolibor and Modhu were a few native preachers of Sibsagor. They travelled to neighboring villages, preaching and teaching the gospel of Christ.⁵³ Edward strongly believed that the love of Jesus was for all class of people unlike Alexander Duff's mission strategy which was focused only on the higher class of people in India.

Clark's wife Mary met the Nagas first. The Nagas from time immemorial used to come down in the plains of Assam from the hills for trade as well as for raids and their cherished hunt for heads.⁵⁴ Mary recalls her first encounter with the Nagas:

As each cold season came around hill men came in for trade and sight-seeing. Our press building, with its typesetting, printing, and binding of books was for them the wonders of wonders. Some of the great men, dressed in the military costumes, came one day to our schoolhouse door and, manifesting much interest in what we were doing, were asked, "Wouldn't you like us to come up to your village and teach your children as you see these being taught?" A chief replied, "Yes, and we will send our children to learn." "But we hear that you take heads up there." "Oh yes, we do," he replied, and seizing a boy by the head gave us in a quite harmless way of object-lesson of how they did it.⁵⁵

Ever since encountering the Nagas, from the mission bungalow, the Clarks looked beyond the villages, across the mountains, over the jungles of the plains and they would say to Dr. Brown:

My soul is not at rest; there comes a strange
And secret whisper to my spirit...⁵⁶

⁵² Narola Imchen, *Remembering our ForeMothers*, (Jorhat: Women Study Department Eastern Theological College, 2003), 128.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 15.

⁵⁴ A. Bendangyabang, *History of Christianity in Nagaland Social Change 1872-1972*, (Bangalore: Shalom Ministry Publication, 2004), 62.

⁵⁵ Mary Mead Clark, *A Corner in India*, 9.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 9.

And they would also tell the Assamese Christians how they longed to take the Gospel to those distant wilds. Ironically, the latter shook their heads doubtfully and said, “They are savages, sahib, village warring with village, constantly cutting off heads to get skulls.” But Clark replied:

The voice of my departed Lord,
‘Go teach all nations’ ...
Comes on the night air and awakes my ear,
And I will go.⁵⁷

It is quite apparent that the Clarks were very faithful and committed to God, and that their physical well-being did not take priority over going up to the mountains among the head-hunters who were revered and feared by the people of the plains, so that they could share the gospel. Within two years into their work at Sibsagar, Clark wrote enthusiastic reports about the Nagas, and he forcefully tried to convince the Missionary Union of the need for a missionary family for the Naga mission. With a heavy heart, Clark wrote:

It is certainly painful for us at Sibsagar to be awake to lift our eyes without seeing these hills & thinking of the men on them who have no knowledge of Christ, the water too flowing in the river past our compound & issuing from these hills only some 20 miles distant, is a constant reminder of those who are perishing without X.⁵⁸

Godhula,⁵⁹ an Assamese evangelist, was found willing to imperil his life to preach to the Nagas whom the Assamese generally disliked. Milton claims that Godhula Brown and E.W. Clark were responsible for the real beginnings of Christian work among the Nagas.⁶⁰

Godhula persuaded a Naga man living near Sibsagar to come to his house and build their relationship. While talking and listening to the Naga man, he was able to learn and speak a little of their language. At Amguri Tea Gardens, Godhula met many Naga men from Dekha Haimong village and shared with them food, smoked and talked together and gradually built a

⁵⁷ Ibid., 10.

⁵⁸ Joshua Lorin, *Naga Christianity*, 75.

⁵⁹ See more details about Godhula in Joseph Puthenpurakal, *Baptist Missions in Nagaland: A study in Historical and Ecumenical Perspective*, (Calcutta: Vendrame Missiological Institute, 1984), 63- 65.

⁶⁰ Narola Imchen, *Remembering our ForeMothers*, 128.

relationship with the Nagas. But when he proposed to accompany them to their village home, it was a different matter. None of the “Tartars” (Village Officials) were with them and what right had they to bring a “subject man,” a “Company man” (Assam was under British colony at this point) into their territory?⁶¹

Godhula was able to persuade the Naga people and went up to the Naga Hill at Delha Haimon village. He proclaimed to be a teacher of a new religion and declared his sole errand. But his motives were impugned. A Naga Chief exclaimed, “What do we want of this man’s new religion?” “Send him off”, “Get him out of the way”, “A spy, doubtless, of the company.” And a small rude hut made of bamboo was assigned to Godhula and a guard appointed to watch him closely. For two to three days, nobody went near the prison hut, but when with his deep-toned, melodious voice he poured out his soul in the sweet gospel hymns in Assamese, the people flocked around him and listened as he told them, in his own eloquent way, the sweet, old story. The Name of Jesus and heaven was introduced to the Ao Naga tribe.⁶²

Godhula was advised by Clark not to remain in the hill for a long time. When Godhula left the hills, the Nagas shed tears. Two of the chief’s men went with him as guards to his home in Sibsagar. Clark was not sure whether the rush for Christianity would quickly vanish or flourish, but one thing he was sure of was that “a great door has been opened and the only way now is to advance” to the hills.⁶³

Sometime between the summer of 1871 and April of 1872, through the persistence of the Ao Nagas, Godhula visited the Naga Hills six times. On the sixth visit, his wife, Lucy went along, and they stayed through early winter (1872) to supervise the building of a good house for themselves. The Nagas instantly built a Chapel at their own initiative. Lorin states that the

⁶¹ Mary Mead Clark, *A Corner in India*, 11.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 11.

⁶³ Joshua Lorin, *Naga Christianity*, 77.

Nagas early on had the evidence of a self-supporting methodology of mission. The hopeful signs of the time encouraged Clark to plea for two missionaries, one to be stationed at Samaguting for the Angami Nagas and the other where Godhula was, for the Ao Nagas. “Perhaps you can get someone to take my place and let me go onto the hills,” Clark petitioned, “I would like Christianity a fair chance in the hill, evangelization not emasculate Xty by taking all (the) crosses out of it.”⁶⁴

The growth of Christianity was favorable and Godhula sent a letter regarding the development of the gospel work:

In these days the Naga people are somewhat anxious about religion. Those calling themselves Christians, do so, understandingly, thus many people desire to meet me. The Naga people say their forefathers in worshipping evil spirits, found only the way to hell. We passed all our lifetime in fear. That there is death we know, besides this, that after death our spirits went below the earth in company with ghosts, this we learned from the mouth of our fore-fathers and so knew; that there is a heaven we know, but that man could go to heaven, this we never heard. But against the teaching of our forefathers a new doctrine has appeared, how true; & how sweet! When we hear this new happy house. In his house we find rest from all anxiety & misery. How strange!⁶⁵

Through the insistence of the Nagas, on December 17, 1872, Clark embarked on a two-day journey to Molungkimong with his Naga escorts, some sixty warriors who came down to receive him. Clark came to the new chapel built by the Nagas and he said, “The hardships & perils on the way to these hills, of living on the hills, and of going from village to village are enough to appal any but a religious motive.” Lorin states probably it was on Sunday December 22, 1872, Clark baptized fifteen Nagas, bringing the total converts to twenty-four.⁶⁶ During this venture beyond the British flag, Clark’s wife was asked by the chief magistrate of Sibsagor Station, “When have you last heard from Mr. Clark?” “Do you ever expect to see your husband back with his head on his shoulder?” She replied, “I need to say I was solicitous, yet from the heart there ever came the answer: “Yes, Colonel Campbell, I expect

⁶⁴ Ibid., 78.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 79.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 80.

him back with his head on; I trust to a higher power than the English government to keep my husband's head on his shoulders.”⁶⁷

Mary Mead Clark reported about when her husband returned from his first mission journey to Dekha Haimong, “I believe I have found my life-work, exclaimed Mr. Clark as he entered the old press bungalow on his return from his twelve days absence in the wilds of barbarism.”⁶⁸ Godhula and his wife lived a part of each year at Dekha Haimong. Mr. Clark would often make occasional visits, but the progress of the mission was slow. To live beyond the English flag at that time required a permit from the Viceroy of India as Nagaland was a separate nation and was not under the colony yet. On making the application to British company for the same, Mr. Clark received the reply that should he enter Naga wilds he must do it at his own risk, with no expectation whatever from, British arms.⁶⁹ This was a period when in the southern part of Angami Naga soil, the British were entering, and a British Captain Butler was killed by the Nagas. Amidst the danger, Mary states that:

But the call ‘Go teach all nations’ and the promise ‘Lo, I am with you always’; nerved my husband to brave all perils that he might there plant the banner of the cross. Taking with him only the most necessary articles, he was soon settled in part of a Naga house, the luxuriance of which demanded a rental of about thirty cents a month. His cook and general housekeeper was an orphan Bengali lad, who had been our ward for some time at Sibsagar. No inducement could have persuaded an Assamese servant to accompany him. There in a crowded village fortified by a heavy stockade, was begun the mining of this unwritten language and the necessary deeper delving to unearth the real character of these new parishioners. At first it was a presumptuous venture to go far outside the village stockade, not only on account of lurking enemies, but because of numerous hidden pongees, to stop upon which would occasion severe, if not fatal, wounds. Far removed from everything approaching music, the sound of the huge drum – the Naga tocsin – calling the people from cultivation or jungle, was not an unwelcome sound.⁷⁰

Mary Mead Clark further reported about the political situation of Nagaland with the British:

There was a general uprising throughout the entire Angami tribe with the purpose of killing or driving out everyone connected with British rule. One English officer and several sepoys were killed. Without pen, ink, paper, telegraph or telephone, the news of these events spread like wildfire from mountain peak to mountains and from tribe to tribe. The air was full of rumors and the people were at high tension. The alarm reaching the plains, Colonel Campbell, English magistrate of Sibsagor District and Colonel Buckingham, of Amguri, each sent special messengers urging us to flee at once. But we were accustomed to war rumors and decided to stand by our won people and quietly await events. The issue of this subjugation was the annexation of the entire subjugation of the Angami tribe, the annexation of the entire country

⁶⁷ Mary Mead Clark, *A Corner in India*, 14.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 15.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 16.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 16.

and permanent occupation of Kohima by a strong military force. This occurred in March 1880, about this time the Lotha tribe, lying between the Angamis and the Aos, was taken in, thus bringing English rule to our Ao border. Mr. Clark, long anticipating this splendid opening, had importuned the Missionary Union to send a man to the Angami Nagas, with Kohima, at an elevation of four thousand five hundred feet, as Missionary Headquarters.⁷¹

With the coming of the British into the Naga Hills, the gospel advanced as it opened doors to the missionaries to enter other parts of Nagaland. Rev. C.D. King was appointed to the Angami tribe as a missionary. Up to 1885, fifty-one Nagas and three Assamese had been baptized in the Ao Naga field. The Gospels of Matthew and John, the story of Joseph, a catechism, a collection of gospel hymns, and the elementary schoolbooks had been published in Ao tribe dialect and schools with Assamese teachers, who also served as evangelists, had been opened in several villages.⁷² Clark was re-enforced by W.S. Rivenburg and his wife in 1885 and he left to America for this first furlong after serving for seventeen years at Naga province. The growth of Christianity was progressive and village after village surrendered to Christ. The missionary staff increased, and their work prospered. Evangelism through the schools and preaching were done. A station school, serving partly as a training school, supplied teachers for the village schools. Mr. Perrine wrote, "I think all who work in the hills will agree with me when I say that with Hillman no mode of missions can compare with education."⁷³ Education truly paved the way for development and modernization among the Nagas.

The Christian influence became so strong in the hills that in 1906, the Deputy Commissioner declared liberty in conscience to all which was tantamount to relieving Christians from payment of village taxes for false worship and for the entertainment of visitors. There was a drastic change in the social customs and norms. The old war songs were turned into Christian hymns and the villages here and there were crowned by large churches rather than by genna stones and pagan prayers. Clark was convinced of the relation between medical

⁷¹ Ibid., 117.

⁷² Ibid., 118.

⁷³ V.K Nuh, *165 years history of Naga Baptists Churches*, 65.

service and evangelism. In 1874, he asked the American committee to grant him allowance for a small stock of medicines and requested them to send him a box of Perry Davis's painkiller and Jaye's medicines. In 1878 he had appropriated Rs.75/1 U.S.D for medicines and added his reason, stating, "success under God in treating the sick has been very great service in mission work."⁷⁴

Clark retired at the age of seventy-one in 1911. In reporting Clark's retirement, Robert B. Longwell wrote:

We have said farewell to Dr. Clark, but the work on the dictionary was not quite finished and the soldier of more than forty years, having been in and labored in the Assam Mission through more than half its history, was obliged to commit a fragmentary end of his literary work to younger and far less efficient hands, as he turned his face at last towards the open doors of the homes which have claimed affection from childhood, comfort and his help through the long and weary years.⁷⁵

The Clarks spent their retired life in their old home in New York. He died on March 18, 1913 and was buried in Amenias, New York. He was seventy-three years old when he laid aside his temporal cares.

The second Mission Center started at Kohima led by C.D. King in 1878. The third Mission Centre at Ukhrul started in 1894. The gospel expanded and spread to different parts of Nagaland by the local people in due time. V. K. Nuh reports that:

The first American Missionary Adoniram Judson landed in Burma in 1813. As a result, today Burma has the highest Baptist membership in Asia. And yet even after 126 years of Christianity, the Nagas who are living in Burma are left with no idea as to what Gospel means to them. Only in 1936, by the name Hay Pung from Somra tribe happened to come to Ukhrul for study and from there he came to know the light of the Gospel and was baptised. When he went back, he started to share the Gospel to the neighbouring villages. In Layshee, the Makuri/Paira saw the Gospel light through one pioneer convert Yisuju in 1948. In Nanyun area first convert came from Kachin in 1954.⁷⁶

⁷⁴ Ibid., 67.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 68-69.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 82-83

WORLD WAR I & II

It was during the First World War, that around 5000 Nagas were taken as Allied labor corps to France and this was their first exposure to the world.⁷⁷ This exposure to Europe brought a sense of oneness among the different tribes. Then followed the Second World War which was fought in Kohima, Nagaland, between Britian and Japan. In the Naga experience, the Second World War has always been called the ‘Japanese invasion’ by people who lived through it. In Tenyiedie (Angami tribe dialect), it is Japan Kepar Tei or Japan Riiwho. During the Second World War, in 1942 the Japanese conquered Burma and were threatening to spill over into India, described as the jewel in the British crown. So, they entered Nagaland region in 1943 under General Renya Mutaguchi to undertake the operation U-go.⁷⁸

The Pochuri/Meluri Nagas and some Kuki tribesman were the first to encounter the Japanese on the Nagaland side as they marched from Burma. The first encounter between Japanese and British troops took place in Kohima in April 3, 1944. The next day, April 4, the Battle of Kohima began with the Japanese attack on General Purposes Transport (GPT) Ridge.⁷⁹ As war broke out, the Japanese treated the Nagas contemptuously, commandeered their food and conscripted them to forced labor. Thus, the Nags turned towards the British side to fight against the Japanese. Thefpulhouvi Angami states why the Nagas fought against the Japanese, “Their friend’s war became their war!”⁸⁰

The Nagas fought alongside the British against the Japanese during the Second World War. Regarding this, the British Governor General reported in Council, “Had the approach of the Nagas been different, the battle might have been extended, the defeat of the Japanese might

⁷⁷ Charles Chasie, *The Naga Imbrolio: A Personal Perspective* (Kohima: Standard Printer & Publishers, 1999), 32.

⁷⁸ Charles Chasie & Harry Fecitt, *The road to Kohima: The Naga experience in the 2nd Word War* (Norway: Barkweaver Publications, 2017), 43-44.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 51.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 56.

have been delayed and the casualties of the British might have been higher or the battle might have taken a different turn.”⁸¹

THE INDO-NAGA CONFLICT

The end of the Second World War was a definitive moment in world history. It ushered in a new era in the world where many colonies got their freedom. There was a global paradigm shift and trends in Global Christianity was witnessed. In the Indian Sub-continent, on July 18, 1947, the British Parliament passed the Indian Independence Bill of July 4, 1947. After two hundred years of groaning under colonial rule, India and Pakistan were finally free to leave the British Commonwealth and become two sovereign dominions.

On 20th February 1947, the Naga National Council (NNC) demanded for an independent Nagaland from the British rulers. The Naga national movement was led by A.Z. Phizo, and in 1947, the NNC declared independence of the Naga people on August 14, 1947. This declaration was intimated to the King of England, to the Government of India and to the Secretary- General of the U.N. But the Indian Government refused to recognize the declaration and imposed Indian rule by hoisting the Indian flag in some parts of Nagaland on 15th August 1947.⁸²

Kaka Iralu a Naga nationalist leader on Indo-Naga conflict reported:

This argument that Nagaland was administered from Assam and therefore formed part of British administered India which was transferred to India when the British departed from India holds no water as far as Nagas are concerned. The British imperialists administered Ceylon and even Burma from their base in India. The first expedition to Burma was even sent from West Bengal. After the Treaty of Yandabu (1826), whatever control the British exercised over Burma was directed from Bengal. That, however, did not result in Burma becoming a part of Indian territory when the British left India. If some Indian politicians would still argue that Nagaland became a part of India because it had hitherto been administered from India. I would also insist by virtue of this argument Burma should also have then become West Bengal and the Burmese, Bengalis on the departure of the British from India. Here, whether the Nagas were administered from Assam or Bengal or London is not the issue at all. The point is this; When the British left

⁸¹ Ibid., 43.

⁸² Wati Longchar, *No more guns: People's Struggle for justice Focus on North East India*, edited by Wati Longchar (Jorhat: The Department of Tribal Studies, Eastern Theological College, 2000), 61.

their South Asian empire, they left it once and for all and all South Asian countries became free again. Nagaland, for one, never expected an Indian invasion of their country based upon now obsolete British colonial mandates. As far as the Naga people were concerned, the authority and Government of the British in India ceased to exist the moment the British withdrew from India and Nagaland.⁸³

However, the Government of India was adamant about the Naga human rights demand. India, the nation that was oppressed for two hundred years, now became the oppressor. Jawaharlal Nehru, the then Prime Minister of India visited Kohima on 30th March 1953. The Prime Minister of Burma, U Nu, was also present, and the Nagas welcomed the two Premiers with the hope to discuss the complete independence of Nagaland. However, the fifteen thousand Nagas who were gathered to welcome them on the appointed day, were warned just ten minutes prior to the meeting by the Indian side, that no written or spoken submission from the Nagas would be allowed, and no questions could be asked. This greatly humiliated the Nagas and prompted them to leave the two Premiers with just a handful of government officials as they staged a mass walkout.⁸⁴ This resulted in a humiliating act towards the two Premiers and stirred the Indian governments' violent acts towards the Nagas.

In January 1956, the whole Naga Hills area was declared as a disturbed area and arrest orders were given for the Naga leaders. In April 1958, the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act was promulgated and subsequently amended in 1972. The draconian Act empowered the army to shoot, to kill, to search, to arrest, to detain anyone under this enormous power.⁸⁵

Vezokho Vero⁸⁶ states that when the Indian army came to Nagaland, uncountable men and women were persecuted. Men folks were hung upside down and beaten, women were brought in groups inside the Church and raped. Many villages were burned down many times.

⁸³Kaka. D. Iralu, *Nagaland and India: The Blood and the tears* (Kohima: Geniune Printing Press, 2000), 29.

⁸⁴ Hattaway, *From Head-hunters to Church Planters*, 38.

⁸⁵ Wati Longchar, *No more guns*, 62.

⁸⁶ Vezokho Vero is one of the Church leaders of Nagaland. He is the Pastor of Naga Shisha Hoho Prayer Center, which is the main prayer home for the Nagas.

Thipuzumi village was burned a record seven times.⁸⁷ Similarly, Zapra Chakhesang, one of the pioneers of the Revival movement also said that the Indian army began to needlessly kill many Nagas. In 1957-59, almost all Naga villages were burned down without any reason. There was turmoil, fear everywhere, no food and no place to sleep. People started to flee into the jungle for survival. On 12th April 1956, the entire Yoruba village was set on fire by the 1st Sikh L.I Regiment of Indian Army. Pastor Vazhoyi Nyekha was arrested at Yoruba village and he was killed at Sakrozaru, below Thenyizu village, on 18th April 1956.⁸⁸

Neivotso Neikha⁸⁹ states that in 1956, almost all the tribes of Nagaland together set a date to fight against the Indian Army. However, this turned out to be a futile attempt as they were outnumbered and utilized weaponry much inferior to the Indians. The Nagas fled from their villages to the forests and many of them died there out of starvation and sickness. Living in the jungles, both the young and old Nagas began to fervently pray to The Lord for deliverance from their great suffering. God heard their anguished cry and poured out His Spirit among them.⁹⁰

The blood and tears of Nagaland is well encrypted in Easterine Iralu's poem:

“OUR STORY”

**Our story is etched in blood
in blood and tears
the tears of a people
of five hundred villages
and two hundred more
as they fled a burning
hell's wrath in flames licking**

⁸⁷ Interview with Vezokho Vero on 12/26/2019.

⁸⁸ Interview with Zapra Chakhesang on 12/30/2019.

⁸⁹ Neivotso Neikha is an ordained minister who is one of the pioneers of the Naga Revival movement.

⁹⁰ Interview with Neivotso Neikha on 29/06/16.

at homes and stacks of grain
hell's wrath lit by torches
of soldiers of India's mighty army.

The tears the bitter tears
of a people for amnesty
professed, generous, on their return
that was no amnesty
but camp of concentration
concentrating
on the strangulation of Naga spirit
by torture, rape and genocide
of Naga men, women, child, all
in whose veins flowed blood Naga.

Tears of a people forced
to witness the methodological
desecration of their God's abode
by the pain, the blasphemy
of their virgins raped, done to death
upon the altars of churches
transformed
by India's soldiers to altars of lust.

The blood, the waterfalls of blood
of men driven to despair
driven to China, driven to Pakistan
for arms to defend a cause
a nation knew was right;
blood, blood, the blood of men killed
for refusing to betray
a brother, a father a son, a fellow Naga

the where's, the who's, the what's
of an incessant questioning
to which some men knew no answer
yet from whom was exacted
payment with their lifeblood.

Blood, the blood of men
Who fell in Myanmar's woods
And stained her soil purple
Never deeming their lives, a sacrifice
Too great for Nagaland
Blood, the rivers of blood
of Nagas trodden underneath
the rifle butts and boots
of India's advancing army
the blood of a hundred thousand and more
killed for love of a land

Oh, from the ashes of Nagaland
Rising with the smoke of age
A spirit song, song of blood and tears
Ascend, carry up our lament
We will be what we are
To be otherwise would make liars of us all.
Then as to another Pharaoh
To a second Egypt
Let God rise and declare
"Leave my people be!"⁹¹

⁹¹Iralu, Nagaland and India, 45.

The Naga people suffered great injustice at the hands of the Indians; when they cried out to God, He heard them. Narola Imchen⁹² also parallels the plight and rescue of the Nagas to the Israelites in the Old Testament. She alludes that God tells Moses in Exodus 3:7-9 that He has seen the misery of His people at the hands of the Egyptians and is concerned about their suffering. The cry of the Israelites reached God and He saw how oppressed they were; thus, He would rescue them. This is how God moved and rescued the Naga people from their oppression – just as He rescued the Israelites.⁹³ The accounts of the movement of God and the polycentric Revival in Nagaland will be recorded in detail in the next chapter.

⁹² Narola Imchen is Principal and Professor of History of Christianity at Eastern Theological College, India.

⁹³ Interview with Narola Imchen on 1/4/2020.

CHAPTER - 3

THE POLYCENTRIC REVIVAL HISTORY OF NAGALAND

REVIVAL IS HERE

The Christian Revival in Nagaland began quietly in its various rural areas. The isolated centers of renewal in Christian commitment grew steadily under the leadership of several indigenous leaders, away from the scrutiny of the outside world. This extraordinary movement actually began during the time of brutal persecution promulgated by the Indian government, and grew during persecution of a different kind from the existing church due to the doctrinal differences. It grew in intensity in the wake of a number of miraculous accounts. The majority of the accounts that follow have been gathered from those who were participants in the events described. The information has been gathered through personal interviews and represents only a fragment of all that took place. Due to the dispersed nature of the Revival, it is very difficult to get a comprehensive accounting of all that happened. Yet, what is set out here, gives a representative selection of the little-told story of the Nagaland Revival.

The Revival occurred in different phases and waves. It occurred in different rhythms, across different times and space. It is hard to record the exact date and year, however, the early occurrence of Revival is often called the 'Repentance Revival' which occurred among the people of the Ao tribe in 1952. The same wave of Revival, which was accompanied with signs and wonders, such as speaking in tongues and various other miracles first started in 1957 at Wokha district among the Lotha tribe. The first wave had a significant impact in the manifestation of the glory of God and the growth of Christianity.

When the Holy Spirit was poured out in Nagaland, it was mostly the illiterate and simple farmers, housewives and ordinary people who were transformed to work as missionaries

wherever they went. Paul Hattaway, an American missionary, states, “The presence and transforming power of the Holy Spirit started to work tribe by tribe, village by village and house by house.”¹ It is difficult to pin point the exact time and location as to when and where the Revival started. However, 1952 is generally regarded as the year when Revival movement started in Nagaland in the Ao area.

REPENTANCE REVIVAL

One bright and sunny afternoon, around thirty believers had gathered at Mokokchung² for prayer, when they all witnessed a rainbow in the sky; while staring at this unique phenomenon, they all heard a loud and clear voice resonating around them, announcing, “This Revival will spread all over Nagaland.”³ They were all very shocked and in awe of the power of God. As God has clearly said in the Scriptures, “So shall My Word be that goes forth from My mouth; it shall not return to Me void, but it shall accomplish what I please, and it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it” (Isaiah 55:11), this promise of Revival truly spread throughout Nagaland over the years and its effects have been wondrous to behold indeed.

Under the leadership of Rikum Ao,⁴ a personal associate of G. E. Hunter⁵ who worked among the tribe of the Ao Nagas, the movement of the Holy Spirit swept through Nagaland in 1952, during which the Christians all over the land began to pray with tears, confessions were made, and people began to manifest the power of the Holy Spirit. The believers, touched by the Revival, clamored for prayer meetings and Christian fellowship; youth and women fellowships became the epicenters of the Revival movement. Hattaway affirms, “A direct result was that many evangelistic enterprise and outreach missions were set up.”⁶ The consumption

¹Paul Hattaway, *From Head-hunters to Church Planters: An Amazing Spiritual Awakening in Nagaland* (GA: Authentic Publishing, 2006), 62.

² A town in the northern part of Nagaland.

³ Nagaland Christian Revival Church, ‘Go & Tell’, NCRC Mission Newsletter 1.1 (April 2001), 25.

⁴ Rikum Ao was one of the pioneers of the revival movement in Nagaland.

⁵ An American Baptist Missionary to Nagaland, who worked among the Ao Nagas.

⁶ Hattaway, *From Head-hunters to Church Planters*, 63.

of tobacco and self-made rice beer rapidly reduced and people began to go door-to-door, asking for forgiveness, crying with loud voices and confessing their sins.⁷ This was the beginning of the Revival movement, which the Naga leaders called the ‘Repentance Revival.’ It was so named because every believer who was touched by the Holy Spirit began to recognize their sins and started to repent – either through tearful confessions in church or through their physical action of visiting others and begging for forgiveness in God’s name and discarding all worldly substances which had kept them away from having a relationship with God. The Repentance Revival started manifesting firstly in the Ao tribe, but later it was apparent among all the other tribes of Nagaland.

On 12th July 1952, I. Toshi⁸ was passing through a deep forest for mission to another village in the Ao area. On the way, he saw a tiger devouring a cow in the middle of the road. Armed with the knowledge that God was with him, he commanded the tiger in the name of the Almighty God to give way, and the tiger surprisingly gave way and moved to the other side. This was the characteristic courage that the ongoing revival imbued in people. They had no more fear for anything.

Further, in Mangmetong, another Ao village, I. Toshi was walking with Rikum on the street, when he saw two angels leading their way. He asked Rikum whether he could see something supernatural. Rikum then smiled and replied to him that he was waiting for him to speak out, as he too could see the same phenomenon. Toshi then heard an audible voice directing him to go to the tribe of the Lothas (Wokha district); he was not aware that the Revival was about to commence in full swing.⁹ Thus, the Revival began to spread from the Ao area to

⁷ Revival, Nagaland Christian Revival Church Golden Jubilee (1962-2012), Souvenir, 3.

⁸ I. Toshi was an evangelist and a revivalist’s pioneer.

⁹ Revival, Nagaland Christian Revival Church Golden Jubilee (1962-2012), Souvenir, 5.

the Lotha (another tribe) area through the endeavors of these evangelists. They listened to the command of God and were thus instrumental in spreading this Revival.

FIRST WAVE OF REVIVAL – GLORY OF GOD, CONVERSION, DEEPENING OF WORSHIP

Even though the advent of the Revival movement can be traced to 1952, it did not occur simultaneously throughout Nagaland; Revival occurred in Nagaland in different provinces at different times. However, the earliest evidence of the Baptism of the Holy Spirit and the manifestation of speaking in tongues is credited to the Christians in the Wokha district, where a Revival meeting was held on 17th September 1957.¹⁰ The Holy Spirit filled the Wokha area and honored them as the first to experience the phenomenon of *glossolalia*, which was a new phenomenon to the Naga Christians.

During the Revival meetings, many people would begin to spontaneously speak in a heavenly language about which they did not have any prior knowledge. Their tongues would move of their own accord as they were filled by the Holy Spirit. Usually, the one who manifested the speaking in tongues did not interpret it; there would be others to interpret the words and all would pray for direction from the Holy Spirit. The upside of the tongues-speaking was that so many were blessed and repented. However, the downside was that since it was an alien phenomenon, some people were confused and criticized it, much like how the disciples were mocked during the day of Pentecost in Acts 2. The speaking of tongues in Nagaland is distinct from the rest of the world; a scientific research has not been conducted, but from a personal experience of travelling across Asia and western countries, it is very distinct as it is communal, it seems to be identical, is in harmony and it builds to a climax.

¹⁰ Brief account of Nagaland Christian Revival Church Golden Jubilee Celebration (1962-2012) Souvenir cum album, 1.

Nagaland is a mountainous state for the most part, and the churches in the villages are usually constructed at the top of the hill, so that it is visible to the whole village as the defining building. Churches then were mostly made of wood or stone and bamboos; the roof of the church bore a wooden cross. The villagers would have to climb the mountain in order to reach the church. On September 22, 1957, some believers in Wokha had gathered for prayer, when suddenly, tongues of fire could be seen flickering atop the church building. People rushed from all over the town to the church, and numerous witnesses to this miraculous sight are alive even today.¹¹ They still remember the incident vividly and encourage the Christians today in Wokha by reminding them about the unquestionable power of God.

Similarly, the Sendenyu Baptist church in February 1959 witnessed an extraordinary supernatural phenomenon. During one of the evening services, while the believers were praying in the church, suddenly, a flame of fire appeared in the church in full view of many people. It came down and settled over the pulpit at the front of the sanctuary. The people were amazed with this fire as it was accompanied with a mighty sound like a loud roar. The flame divided into tongues of fire, and the people gathered in the church began to speak in tongues, prophesy and see visions.¹²

Another supernatural phenomenon occurred in the Pochury area in the era of 1976-77 when the people saw a ball of fire falling from heaven towards the eastern side of their village. Even people from other places like Meluri saw the same phenomenon occurring at the same time in Lephori (another) village. When the Revival pioneers reached these places, they were amazed to witness the people already in a state of Revival – worshipping and praising God in the Spirit and testifying about the Holy Spirit.¹³

¹¹ Ibid., 66.

¹² Nagaland Christian Revival Church, 'Go & Tell', NCRC Mission Newsletter 1.1 (April 2001), 69.

¹³ Brief account of Nagaland Christian Revival Church Golden Jubilee Celebration (1962-2012) Souvenir cum album, 8.

After World War II,¹⁴ the villagers of Chiechama were blessed with a great miracle. One of the witnesses, Pusanyii Riipreo, states, “We saw a light like a big rainbow. Suddenly, this light exploded into scores of lights, akin to light bulbs, and started to move towards us who were watching. These balls of lights then entered our church and disappeared there. It was a highly visual supernatural phenomenon which occurred literally in plain sight of all.”¹⁵ These were signs from God in various parts of Nagaland that very soon He would be sending His Spirit to move and work among the people of Nagaland.

When God poured His Spirit on the people of Chiechama, they began to confess their sins and manifest the presence of the Holy Spirit by speaking in tongues and prophesying. Many fasted and prayed for days and nights, and many were healed of their diseases and infirmities. Some of them realized that they needed to be baptized again by the Holy Spirit and hence were re-baptized. However, confusion also began to creep in, and division started to take place.¹⁶

There was resistance to the Revival on the part of some of the established Baptist churches of the time. Firstly, re-baptism was against the law of the Church. So, the church leaders announced that the members who had received baptism twice would not be allowed to enter the church. Secondly, inside the church, members were not allowed to say “Jehova Tshe” (Praise the Lord). Thirdly, they were not allowed to speak in tongues or prophesy, as some of the church leaders deemed it was just a disturbance. However, the immediate cause of the division was, they forced the members who were re-baptised to step out from the church and never re-enter it again. Moreover, the church would not stretch out her helping hand to the re-baptized in times of marital trouble or death. Therefore, all those who received the baptism of

¹⁴ World War Two was fought in the capital city of Nagaland – Kohima, between the British and Japanese troops. The Nagas played a major role in helping the British win the war in Nagaland.

¹⁵ Husezo Rhakho, *Pneuma: The Spirit of Revival*, ed. by Mezhusevi Zutso (Kohima: NCRC Literature Press, 2017), 180.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 181.

the Holy Spirit separated themselves from the Baptist Church on the 23rd of January 1961, and began to worship at Lt. Kruvi's (a church Deacon's) residence.¹⁷

As they began to worship in different houses, God revealed through prophecy, the exact location of where they should build the Church, and how much capacity it should be able to hold. According to Piisanyu Riipreo, he was both a witness and victim of the horrors inflicted among the Revival church members on the 18th of April 1961. He recalls, "It was a Saturday night. The believers were gathered, and service was being conducted in the newly constructed church made of wood and thatch. Suddenly, some unbelievers arrived and started to throw stones at the church. However, the believers continued to pray. After some time, those same unbelievers lit the church on fire and burnt it down."¹⁸ Undeterred, the believers continued to gather for study and prayer.

REPENTANCE OF SINS

Lima Jamir¹⁹ reports that when God poured His Spirit on the people, they began to confess their sins and manifest the presence of the Holy Spirit by speaking in tongues and prophesying. Many fasted and prayed for days and nights, and many were healed of their diseases and infirmities.²⁰ During the service, people would go to the altar and they would confess their sins voluntarily under the conviction of the Holy Spirit. The confession of sins in public became quite common during the Revival movement. Angami states the Repentance experience:

When the Spirit of God moved upon the people, they began to see their sinful condition and their unworthiness before their Lord. The conviction of sin was so strong that people would cry and weep all over the church sanctuary. There were many instances in the Churches that Revival broke out without preachers. As the people prayed for Revival, the Holy Spirit Himself started working upon the people. People were not physically hungry anymore and they prayed all day all night. Even the form of worship and the conventional method of praying, singing and

¹⁷ Christian Revival Church Chiechama Golden Jubilee (1961-2011), Souvenir, 32.

¹⁸ Interview with Piisanyu Riipreo on 12/20/2020.

¹⁹ Lima Jamir is Associate Professor in New Testament at Eastern Theological College, India.

²⁰ Interview with Lima Jamir on 1/5/2020.

preaching was changed. Meetings were unplanned and informal. Prayer meetings continued for hours. The preacher would be disturbed in the middle of their sermons as people would start to cry out loudly in the congregation.²¹

Zhowheyi Nyekha²² recalls his experience about the mass Repentance during the Revival.

It was during the Revival period, during a service, my friend put his hand over my head, and he started to pray for me. He started praying that God will mend my prideful heart and allow the Holy Spirit to touch me so that I can confess my sins and experience what he is experiencing. At first, I was irritated by his prayer but later I said an earnest prayer to the Lord to let me also experience the Revival. I started to pray and suddenly all my sins flashed back, and I was so guilty of all my sins. I don't know how I moved straight to the altar. Then, I started to cry out and confessed my sins in front of all the congregation. Suddenly, everyone stood up and faced towards different directions, some went near the door, some near the window and all started to cry in repentance of our own sins. It was indeed a mass experience of crying and coming before the throne of Grace.²³

There was also mass conversion among the unbelievers. Vezokho Vero²⁴ recalls how the Christians were mocked by the non-Christians. The unbelievers would gather outside the church and they usually mocked the Christians by saying that they always cried and wasted their time praying day and night. This was because when the revival began, there were signs and wonders and the manifestation of the Holy Spirit; mass gathering with fervent prayers and repentance of sins with loud prayers and cries to the Lord was a common trend. Interestingly, the Holy Spirit also fell upon the unbelievers who were outside the Church and they all started to repent by crying and falling on the ground.²⁵ This was a phenomenon due to which many unbelievers came to the Lord during the Revival.

²¹ Vebu Khamo, *Pneuma: The Spirit of Revival*, ed. by Mezhusevi Zutso (Kohima: NCRC Literature Press, 2017), 85.

²² Zhowheyi Nyekha was one of the key leaders who was used greatly by God during the Revival movement. He is the Senior Pastor of Chakhesang Christian Revival Church.

²³ Interview with Zhowheyi Nyekha on 1/02/2020.

²⁴ Vezokho Vero is one of the pioneers and the Pastor of Naga Shisha Hoho Prayer Centre.

²⁵ Interview with Vezokho Vero on 12/26/2019.

SIGNS AND WONDERS

Throughout the whole decade, the Revival continued and was apparent through various miraculous events and genuine repentance of sins. Neihulie Angami²⁶ states, “Blind eyes were opened, deaf ears were healed, crippled bodies were restored and even the dead were raised.”²⁷ In a certain Naga town, a woman who was dead for four hours was raised to life through the prayer of evangelist Zhouheyi.²⁸ Zhouheyi Nyekha recalls God using him to push back the realm of death:

It was at Chozuba Town, where a woman died at 10 pm. Upon his arrival at the town, the town was full of agony and silence as everyone knew someone died because it was a small town. I was asked by the deceased family members to come and pray. At first, I hesitated as the woman was dead for two hours and declined to go and pray. But the people insisted with me to come and pray. So, I went there by faith not knowing what to do. When I reached the spot, all the family members were crying and mourning for their loss. I was so nervous, but the Holy Spirit encouraged to have faith and represent Christ. First, I prayed a deliverance prayer by casting the death spirit over the body, then I prayed to the Heavenly Father to release the Spirit of life over her. Then, suddenly, she started to cough and came back to life. Lastly, I prayed for healing over her body and she rose up immediately and came back to life and went to the kitchen as she was so hungry.²⁹

Narola Imchen³⁰ states, “It should be noted that prior to the movement, church services were very structured and formal and there was no evidence of the manifestation of the Holy Spirit; however, after the Holy Spirit began to move, prayers, evangelism, healings and miracles akin to those recorded in the book of Acts began to occur.”³¹

During the Revival movement, some people resisted the conviction of the Holy Spirit; one such man was Gwanilo Seb, a notorious drunkard who had been excommunicated from the church years earlier. One evening, he came to the church to satisfy his curiosity. An elderly

²⁶ Neihulie Angami was one of the pioneers of the Revival movement and founder of the first Bible College in Nagaland which is known as Kohima Bible College.

²⁷ Ibid., 64.

²⁸ Mezhusevi Zhutso, *Pneuma: The Spirit of Revival*, ed. by Mezhusevi Zutso, (Kohima: NCRC Literature Press, 2017), 47-48.

²⁹ Interview with Zhouheyi Nyekha on 1/02/2020.

³⁰ Narola Imchen is the Principal and Professor of History of Christianity in Eastern Theological College, India.

³¹ Interview with Narola Imchen on 1/4/2020.

Christian man saw him standing by the door and pulled him inside towards the pulpit. Suddenly, an invisible hand struck him hard on his head which made him fall and unable to speak. The whole day he could not speak as the Holy Spirit convicted him and melted his stubborn heart. The instant his name was written in the church register, he regained his speech! Further, the elderly man who had pulled him inside the church also experienced a miracle. He was an illiterate man who had never learned to read and write. But during the Revival movement, he was miraculously able to read fluently. For the rest of his life, he diligently read the Word of God with joy.³²

Pushuwuyi Nyekha³³ recalls a revivalist in his village called Cheyosulhu Nienu who went to a Sumi village. When he reached there, the villagers were mourning for a dead person and so he went and prayed for the deceased person, who was raised to life by the power of God. Everyone was amazed and gave glory to God for the miracle. In the same village there was a man who wanted to destroy the Revival church; thus, he took a machete and was about to destroy the church. But as he lifted the machete to cut the posts of the church – which were made of bamboo and wood – he was paralyzed in the exact posture with which he was about to destroy the church; he could not move a single muscle. It was as though he became a statue, though he was alive. At this time, Cheyosulhu was present and people took him to pray for this man who was stuck in the same position for many days. When he went and met him, he asked him if he was willing to confess his sin. The man agreed and confessed his sins and was immediately healed.³⁴

During an Indian Army operation, three old women of Longkum village were hiding in a cave in the jungle for their lives. There was no food, and nobody knew about their hide-

³² Brief account of Nagaland Christian Revival Church Golden Jubilee Celebration (1962-2012) Souvenir cum album, 72.

³³ Pushuwuyi Nyekha is one of the revival pioneers and a village leader at Chesezu village.

³⁴ Interview with Pushuwuyi Nyekha on 12/20/2020.

out. When they began to starve, they prayed to God for food. Astonishingly, a crow would bring them bread from the army camp daily for three months, and once when they were fed up of the bread they prayed for meat. Then, a wild cat brought a wild fowl and left it at the entrance of the cave.³⁵ God thus used nature – birds and animals – in a myriad of ways during the Revival. Vezokho Vero further states that when the Indian army came to attack Naga villages, God would send the tigers before the armies arrived to the village; this would be a sign for the villagers to run to the forest for their lives.³⁶ This was how God's sovereignty over creation was evident and apparent throughout the Revival movement.

DECIPHERING THE CODE

An incident occurred at Thipuzu village where a church deacon was taken into custody by the Indian army for no reason. He was illiterate and helpless and thus unable to communicate with his captors since they only spoke Hindi – which was alien to him. Once imprisoned, he began to pray and suddenly the Spirit was poured out upon him; he went into a trance and started to speak in tongues. However, the Indian army heard him speaking in Hindi stating his innocence and defending himself against the injustice they were committing against him. They were so astonished that they allowed him to leave.³⁷

Similarly, at Yaongyimsen (an Ao) village, some Phom tribe people, who could not understand the Ao dialect came to attend the Revival service. However, to their great astonishment, the whole sermon was spoken in their own local Phom dialect; they understood every word and were immensely blessed. After the service, they asked the church members how and why the preacher had preached in their dialect. But it was revealed to them that the preacher had preached in his own Ao dialect and not in theirs. The Holy Spirit had worked

³⁵ Revival, Nagaland Christian Revival Church Golden Jubilee (1962-2012), Souvenir, 3.

³⁶ Interview with Vezokho Vero on 12/26/2019.

³⁷ Interview with Vezokho Vero on 12/26/2019.

miraculously as a translator so that all who attended the Revival meeting would be blessed. This miracle reminded everyone about the same occurrence in the book of Acts chapter 2, when the people heard the disciples speak in their native tongues through the power of the Holy Spirit.³⁸

STRUGGLES AND PERSECUTION

In most places all over Nagaland, many of the revivalists were not allowed to use the village community well, their children were not allowed to study in the village schools, many of them were banned from travelling in community buses, and they were also banned from cutting wood in the community forests of the villages. Around the years 1960-67, revivalists were not even allowed to buy Bibles.

Another incident occurred when Neihulie Angami³⁹ was nearly killed in an Ao village when he went there for a Revival meeting. After the meeting was over, some of the villagers came to kill him at the house where he was staying. The owner of the house immediately pushed him inside the barn (paddy storage house) and hid him there. The people were shouting from outside and finally entered the house and asked the owner, “Where is the Revival man?” The owner was compelled to lie and told them that the said man had escaped already after jumping out of the window. For allowing him to escape, the owner was beaten black and blue.⁴⁰

According to Zhouhuyi Nyekha, almost all the revivalists were branded with names and phrases such as – ‘those who often cries,’ ‘those who have no honor,’ ‘those who are fools,’ ‘those who are poor,’ ‘those who are drunk,’ ‘You revivalists!’ by the Baptists believers. The

³⁸ Interview with Lima Jamir on 1/5/2020.

³⁹ Neihulie Angami was one of the key leaders in the Revival movement.

⁴⁰ Interview with Neiwotso Neikha on 29/06/2016.

other people said that revivalists are akin to trees without roots, because they lacked the foundation of an established church, tradition and denomination.⁴¹

One day, an evangelist, Chuba Ao, and his friends came to Mishili village to preach the gospel. However, the Indian army arrested them on account of reports given by other rival groups that they were rebels; they were made to stand out in the hot sun as punishment, but a single cloud appeared over them and gave them shade completely during the midday hour. On interrogation, they told the astonished army officers that they were gospel preachers for Jesus Christ, after which they were released unconditionally.⁴²

A miraculous but awful incident happened at Hevikhe village under Ayinato Healing and Prayer Centre in 1989 when elderly man, Viyikhe, took up a dao (machete) and chopped the neck of his own brother Shiniho for being a follower of the revivalist. It is stated that 50 percent of his neck was cut off, but miraculously healed by the Almighty God through massage by the believers. The man is still a living witness of the great suffering in the hand of the adversary.⁴³

The ignorance and arrogance of the Naga Baptist leaders led to the extreme act of expelling the revivalists not only from the Church membership but also from their villages in many parts of Nagaland. Opposition from the existing church against the movement of the Holy Spirit led to the foundation of the indigenous Revival Church in Nagaland. The clergymen who had not personally experienced the touch of the Holy Spirit and who were formally taught the doctrine of cessationists were skeptical and extremely against the move of the Holy Spirit. It was partially because they were ignorant of the gifts of the Holy Spirit and it was a new phenomenon which was different from the Baptist doctrine in Nagaland. They would attempt

⁴¹ Husezo Rhakho, *Pneuma*, 184-185.

⁴² Brief account of Nagaland Christian Revival Church Golden Jubilee Celebration, (1962-2012) Souvenir cum album, 19.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 20.

to disrupt the large Revival prayer meetings that were characterized by emotional expressions of shouting, crying, or physical movement in worship like dancing, jumping, clapping. They emphasized that worship should be conducted with reverence. Speaking in tongues, seeing visions, prophecies, casting demons by the revivalists were regarded as false, mad and untrue. The revivalists were criticized and not allowed to say, “Praise the Lord” and continue the works of the Holy Spirit in the Church.⁴⁴

Inevitably, the hostility of the existing church leaders led to the extreme act of expelling the revivalists from church membership. Vangpong Phom recalls the horror of the persecution he saw and witnessed as a young boy. He recalls how many of the revivalist parents and elders were dragged, beaten, bound and kept in the village morung⁴⁵ throughout the night. He states how “As a child of revivalist parents, I was beaten a lot in school and detained purposely for three years in Class A (Kindergarten 1) and three years in Class B (Kindergarten 2). On more than one occasion, because of our belief in the continuation of the work of the Holy Spirit such as miracles and speaking in tongues, my parents were dragged out by the student leaders and beaten in front of my eyes.”⁴⁶

On the 17th of July 1969, the local pastor began to forbid the entry of the members who were weeping and praying in the Spirit into the church. This is how the early revivalists began to gather in houses to conduct prayer fellowships; here, manifestation of the Holy Spirit took place continually, and many people were healed and witnesses to miracles. This is how they separated from the main church and began their own fellowships initially.⁴⁷

⁴⁴ Yoruba Christian Revival Church, Golden Jubilee, (1964-20140), Souvenir, 21.

⁴⁵ It was a central piece in the village which served as a kid of bachelor’s dormitory for the village youth (boys only) and fulfilled a variety of functions.

⁴⁶ Interview with Vangpong Phom on 07/22/2016.

⁴⁷ Husezo Rhakho, *Pneuma*, 186-187.

In Nyang, many of the revivalists' houses were destroyed in varying degrees; some were mutilated so badly that it was impossible to inhabit it. One of the Revival leaders, Hamlen's house was also destroyed beyond repair. However, destruction of property was not enough; the non-believing villagers then gathered all the revivalists and brought them to Yongnyah, in order to drive them out from the Phom tribal area.

During one of the student conferences of the Phom tribe people, they came up with the idea for one common denomination i.e. Baptist for all, and questioned Dauben as to why he had brought a new religion in their midst and asked him whether he would stop or not. He replied saying that he knew what he was doing was real and he would embrace it no matter what the cost. Immediately they began to threaten and beat him. When he ran out from the house into the forest and finally could not run any longer, they stepped all over his body and threatened him with spears and dao.⁴⁸ He courageously said to them, "You can kill me, but you cannot kill the Holy Spirit. Are you not afraid of God taking revenge on you?" They got scared after hearing these prophetic words and left him after warning him not to practice the new 'religion' anymore.⁴⁹

The main accusations against the Revival movement were the following:

1. Assurance of salvation here on earth is not possible. So, Revival believers giving testimonies of personal salvation is not possible.
2. Except on the said fixed days and time by the church, it is madness to pray, sing, worship and preach. Preaching and worshipping on other days were not allowed. Any violation of which is liable to punishment.
3. Mass prayer with shouting, crying, and indisciplined physical movements like jumping, waving and clapping hands should not be allowed.

⁴⁸ It is the traditional sword of the Naga people, comprising of a wooden hilt and rectangular metal form.

⁴⁹ Interview with Rev. Neiwoitso on 29/06/2016.

4. Revival is a new religion. So, every faithful Church member should oppose it.
5. The so called 'Baptism in the Holy Ghost' is a heresy because the Holy Spirit is already given to us and such experiences as claimed by the revivalists is unacceptable.
6. Divine gifts, healings, speaking in tongues, visions, prophecies and such claims by the revivalists as spiritual gifts are all false and such divinations are devilish.
7. Without a theological background or a formal degree, one is not entitled nor qualified to preach or teach. So, ignorant and naïve Revival preachers should not be allowed to preach the Gospel.⁵⁰

These instances of persecution by the existing churches did not stop the Revival movement, but rather, it continued to grow. More fellowships and groups were formed because they were not accepted in the mainline Churches. The more they started to meet, the more they felt the need to be more untied and work towards expanding the Revival movement. After prayers through the leading of the Holy Spirit, they decided to have a convention for all revivalists at Keruma (now Zhadima) under the leadership of Toshi.⁵¹

THE FIRST REVIVAL CONVENTION

The First Convention was held at Keruma on 5-8th January 1961 amidst intense persecution by the Indian government. About seven hundred believers gathered for the Revival convention. Meetings were held from 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 pm. It was a dangerous period for the Nagas to gather in this period as the Indian government had imposed curfew, due to which no more than four people were allowed to gather at the same time or place. The Indian army had the power to shoot anyone who violated these rules. Unsurprisingly, during the meeting, the army surrounded them and was about to shoot. However, a prophecy came to the believers to

⁵⁰ Revival, Nagaland Christian Revival Church Golden Jubilee (1962-2012), Souvenir, 3-4.

⁵¹ Mezhusevi Zutso, *Pneuma: The Spirit of Revival*, ed. by Mezhusevi Zutso (Kohima: NCRC Literature Press, 2017), 16.

start shouting ‘Jehovatshe’ (‘Praise the Lord’) and by uttering Jehovatshe (Praise the Lord) they were saved.⁵² Sanchu records this miraculous event:

It was during the First Revival Convention which was held in Keruma village from January 5th-8th 1961. It was during the time when the Indian army was suppressing the Nagas. The Naga people were not allowed to gather or move from place to place. However, the Nagas gathered for the convention despite the danger. The Indian army got furious and was ready to fire upon them. The Lord divinely and prophetically spoke to the believers to shout, ‘Praise the Lord’ and pray for divine protection. One of the army men contacted the Shillong headquarter; in turn they were directed not fire upon the ‘people of Praise the Lord’ nor torture them.⁵³

Ever since then, ‘Jehovatshe’ became the popular phrase to address the revivalists. The hand of God was so evident in their lives that the Nagas would automatically raise their praises to the living God. This incident brought confidence and belief in the power of saying ‘Praise the Lord’ among the Nagas. Vebu Khamo reports that there were also instances where victories over demon possession and evil powers have been won through the proclamation of “Praise the Lord” three times.⁵⁴

Angami reports the outpouring of the Holy Spirit during the convention:

During the convention, the move of the Holy Spirit was wonderful. Many people were slain under the power of the Holy Spirit and had seen visions. Many saw angels coming down to the meeting place. Holy communion was served in the meeting on Sunday. The servers could not even serve properly as they started to weep during serving. The meeting continued from 8am to 3pm. The presence of God was so real. Many people saw the Lord through vision and started to pray out loud crying in repentance.⁵⁵

After the convention, on their way back to their respective homes, when the Naga believers were confronted by the Indian army, they raised both their hands and shouted, “Praise the Lord” and surprisingly, they were left alone without any harm by the army. Later, it was learnt through a reliable source that they were given specific orders from headquarters that

⁵² Revival, Nagaland Christian Revival Church Golden Jubilee (1962-2012), Souvenir, 3.

⁵³ Khamo, *Pneuma: The Spirit of Revival*, 82.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 83.

⁵⁵ Zutso, *Pneuma: The Spirit of Revival*, 17.

those people who say, “Praise the Lord” should not be harmed.⁵⁶ It was a secret power-code given by God to the Nagas for protection.

THE SECOND REVIVAL CONVENTION

As a result of the First Convention, revivalists were taught by God Himself, the power of praise and worship, and they became more organized and decided to organize another convention at Gariphema on 6-9th January 1962, the following year. The Second Convention was already revealed through Mr. Chieku of Gariphema village, that a historical event was about to occur in Gariphema. When the believers were praying, they received a prophetic message through the Holy Spirit, “Listen! From this village, a new church will be founded, and this church will grow and spread to the East and the West, from the North to the South and to the ends of the Earth.”⁵⁷ It created confusion among the believers until the Second Convention was held at this village.

At the convention, the speaker Selvaraj, from Ceylon Pentecostal Mission, asked the Naga revivalists to join their denomination. The Naga leaders went to the hilltop of the village and prayed to God for His leading and direction. They received a clear revelation from God after prayer and fasting that they should not join any other denomination and remain independent and indigenous.⁵⁸ The name of the denomination was revealed to many men of God such as Rev. Yanara, Pastor Neivilhoulie, Rongseng and Vilhounyu. As they prayed to God, through a vision, four letters were revealed – ‘NCRC’ which stands for, “Nagaland Christian Revival Church”⁵⁹ Revelations through prophecy and vision were confirmed through elders Khriechol Angami, Rongsen Ao, Vilhounyu Zao, Yanaro Lotha and Neivilhoulie as the will of God. An offering was collected of Rs. 376.05 (approximately \$6 USD) for the Third

⁵⁶ Revival, Nagaland Christian Revival Church Golden Jubilee (1962-2012), Souvenir, 10.

⁵⁷ Thejano Kets, *Pneuma: The Spirit of Revival*, ed. by Mezhusevi Zutso (Kohima: NCRC Literature Press, 2017), 120-121.

⁵⁸ Revival, Nagaland Christian Revival Church Golden Jubilee (1962-2012), Souvenir, 10.

⁵⁹ Zutso, *Pneuma: The Spirit of Revival*, 24.

Convention to be held at Longidang; this was a huge amount at that time.⁶⁰ After much prayer under the guidance of the Holy Spirit the new Indigenous Church was named and formed as Nagaland Christian Revival Church on 9th Jan 1962 at Gariphema Village.

Gariphema village, after the Revival, witnessed a massive change. People became more sensible, generous and giving. Debts were paid and education began to improve. The Church attendance grew in number and in every corner of the village people could hear shouts of “Jehova Tshe.” There were reports on how people started to communicate with each other through unknown tongues.⁶¹ The village later became a model village, where two different tribes of people lived in harmony with each other. The whole village had only one Indigenous Revival Church. The people believe the prosperity of Gariphema village is due to their obedience to God.

THE NCRC MODEL OF PRAYER

The revivalist Neihulie Angami wrote, “The key to bringing Revival in Nagaland and the rampant growth of the Revival Churches in Nagaland was because of the result of fasting and prayer. Repentance and confessions were spontaneous during the revival.”⁶² The Churches were packed with people flocking from villages and towns for prayer and fasting.

The prayer model is distinct from any other tradition of various Protestant denominations. When the believers gather, the prayer is done systematically by uttering out loudly, “*Jehovatshe, Jeohvatshe, Jehovatshe*” three times before and after every prayer. First, the prayer of confession of our sins, the idea of being sanctified before coming to the throne of grace. Second, mass recitation of Mark 16:17-18, “And these signs will follow those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues; they will

⁶⁰ Revival, Nagaland Christian Revival Church Golden Jubilee (1962-2012), Souvenir, 10.

⁶¹ Thejano Kets, *Pneuma: The Spirit of Revival*, 121.

⁶² Khamo, *Pneuma: The Spirit of Revival*, 77.

take up serpents; and if they drink anything deadly, it will by no means hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover.” Then, prayer of deliverance, engaging in spiritual warfare is uttered, by believing in these words of Jesus found in the Scripture. During the Revivals, the believers witnessed so many miracles such as the healing of the sick by laying their hands on them, the casting out the demons from the possessed in the name of Jesus and there are some testimonies in which some of them even got hold of live snakes by interpreting the Scriptures literally. This was all due to their child-like faith in the Lord. This was how this passage of Scripture was added to the liturgy of the Church. Third, prayer of victory over the enemy and thanksgiving for His grace and blessings.

Shiwoto Assumi⁶³ stated that the NCRC prayer model began through the revelation of the Holy Spirit in the year 1952 at Longkhum village under the leadership of evangelist Rikum and Imkong Toshi and later spread to the neighboring villages such as Mongia and Keruma in the 1960s. Beilieu Shuya⁶⁴ stated that no one should take credit for the revelation that was revealed by the Holy Spirit.⁶⁵ The exact date and the origin of the prayer model is difficult to trace as it is polycentric in nature, and all the leaders claim to have been directed by the Holy Spirit.

Neivotso Nyekha reports that the Scripture passage Mark 16:17-18 was a prophetic message to the Revival pioneers in the 1960’s. There were demon-possessed people in the town and villages, and they were brought for prayers. The revivalists in action were guided with an inspiration to recite and use the Holy inspired Word of God as an authoritative word by reciting Mark 16:17-18 before casting out the demons.⁶⁶ The pneumatic NCRC prayer model started at different times and places. Thus, it was not a result of passing down an evangelical tradition.

⁶³ Shiwoto Assumi is one of the pioneer and Senior Pastor of Purana Bazar NCRC, Dimapur.

⁶⁴ Beilieu Shuya is one of the Revival pioneer and the first ordained minister from NCRC.

⁶⁵ Khamo, *Pneuma: The Spirit of Revival*, 78.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 78-79.

BILLY GRAHAM CRUSADE

Billy Graham visited Kohima, Nagaland, in 1972 for a revival crusade during the second wave of revival.⁶⁷ He was the main speaker of the crusade and its impact stands out even today. His visitation boosted attention and credibility to the ongoing revival. It also made a huge impact in the growth of Christianity and ever since, the Billy Graham's style of crusade was adopted and emulated by the Naga evangelists.

Billy Graham recorded his report on Nagaland:

They were in the beautiful and remote and mysterious city in Nagaland. High up in the foothills in the Himalayas in the northeast part of Nagaland. During the Second World War Nagaland was a hub for American troops to fly over to China. The Nagas are a small part of the millions of the mountain people who live in Asia. The scenery is one of the best parts of the world reminding me a great deal of western North Carolina except the hill mountains. Many people have asked me the question why I travel so far to hold a crusade in a remote part of the world. Until a couple years ago I had barely heard the name. It was only a place in a geography map for me. Then I started listening to missionaries what God was doing in this beautiful and mysterious country. For one thing that I find in Nagaland is the largest concentration of Baptists outside United States in the world. The American Baptists brought the Gospel 100 years ago and began their missionary work and today nearly 70% claim to be Christian. I already learn that the tribal Naga people are remarkable people. We can learn many lessons in the United States from them. They were known as head-hunters throughout Asia but because of Christianity the head-hunting practice have ceased. The Naga people are great family people and in fact they respect the old people. Everyone looks forward to getting old because the young people respect the old. There are thousands of people who professed to be Christians yet there are many who are yet to accept Christ. During this past week and the coming week Dr. Ockbahak and I and Click Barrer and others will engage in meetings from morning to night. I have never met people who loves to hear stories especially lives back in America. Some people have asked why do you go so far from home to hold crusade, first, we go because we have been invited and in my ministry I have never been pressured from a group of God fearing people as the Naga people to come and help them celebrate the coming of Christianity by hosting a crusade in spite of the many dangers and which are real. We decided to come and encourage thousands of believers who loves Jesus Christ. We were repeatedly warned that this is a dangerous place at this time but deep down in our heart we felt that this was God's plan and God's will for us to come. Certainly, Satan doesn't want us to come to take the Gospel to anywhere in the world. He is going to wage warfare and we are involved in great spiritual conflict right here in faraway Nagaland in North-east India. We need your prayers that the hand of Satan will be restrained. The purpose of the program is to proclaim the gospel and what is the gospel? The gospel is good news, that God loves you, whatever your condition and whatever your sin, God loves you and because of His death, Christ can now forgive you of all your sin.

⁶⁷Crusade, Festival and Celebration cities. <https://billygraham.org/news/media-resources/electronic-press-kit/crusade-cities/>. (accessed on March 3, 2020).

He can touch your body, he can touch your family, work, mind and soul. Let Christ come today in your life.⁶⁸

So many people were blessed and converted during his crusade in Kohima, Nagaland.

Neivotso Neikha recalls Billy Graham's visit, "It was a wonderful experience for the people of Nagaland to witness the mighty move of God through the crusade of Billy Graham. Many people were revived and came to the saving knowledge of Christ through his crusade. I was so honored to even get the opportunity to brush the shoe of Billy Graham."⁶⁹ This humbling act of Neikha, in respect of the man of God, Billy Graham, is evident in his life; he walked with God all his life and became a prominent Revival preacher and leader in Nagaland.

Another important Naga leader was I. Ben Wati, who had a connection with the Billy Graham ministry, and who had a significant influence in Naga Christianity and Asia at large. He was one of the first Nagas to study abroad for theological education. He did his Bachelor of Divinity from Northern Baptist Theological Seminary, Chicago in 1948, and Master of Arts from Wheaton College, USA in 1949. He played a major role in translating the first Naga Bible.⁷⁰ I. Ben Wati served as the Executive Secretary of the Evangelical Fellowship of India for twenty five years since its inception. He also served as the Chairman of the Board of Governors of the Union Biblical Seminary, India, and in the course of time, became the President of the World Evangelical Fellowship.⁷¹

He represented Asia at the Lausanne Conference, 1974; Lausanne movement was started under the leadership of Billy Graham. Preaching throughout the world, Graham developed a passion to unite all evangelicals in the common task of the total evangelization of

⁶⁸ Highland dawn media, Nagaland. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BWWjCES6w9E> (accessed on March 4, 2020).

⁶⁹ Interview with Neivotso Neikha on 6/29/2016.

⁷⁰ A.K.Lama. 2012. A tribute to I Ben Wati. Baptist News, A quarterly newsletter of the council of Baptist Churches in North East India (April-June), 5.

⁷¹ M. A. Solomon. 1991. Evangelicalism in India: Dealing with Nominalism and cults. <https://directionjournal.org/20/1/evangelicalism-in-india-dealing-with.html>. (accessed on March 4, 2020).

the world. In the 1970's, Billy Graham perceived the need for a global congress to reframe Christian mission in a world of political, economic, intellectual and religious upheaval. In July 1974, over 2,400 participants from 150 nations gathered in Lausanne, Switzerland for the First International Congress on World Evangelization.⁷²

I. Ben Wati, during all the chaos and problems in Nagaland and Asia, gave an optimistic appeal to the global Church at the Lausanne World Evangelical Conference in 1974. He reported:

In this congress it is my great joy and privilege to report that despite many roadblocks, evangelism in Asia is gaining ground. Asia is open to the Good News as never before. Our Sovereign Lord God is at work everywhere and we see great opportunities to present Jesus Christ as the only Savior of Asia. Asian evangelicals have caught a new vision not only to evangelize their people but also to send missionaries to the ends of the earth. It may be in war-torn Cambodia and Vietnam; it may be in the so called closed countries like Afghanistan, Bhutan or Nepal; it may be in Muslim countries like Indonesia, Pakistan or Bangladesh; it may be in developed countries like Israel or Japan; it may be in bustling and prosperous Singapore or Hong Kong; in every country and island of Asia the gospel witness is increasing.⁷³

THE SECOND WAVE – REVIVAL INCREASES

With the impact of Billy Graham's crusade, the Nagas started to seek God more fervently. And in 1974, the Spirit of the Lord revealed to some revivalist prayer warriors that The Lord was going to send a mighty Revival to the whole Naga community. They were directed by the Lord to tell the Nagas to visit all the Baptist Tribal Associations, announcing to them that the church leaders should stop the oppression against the Revival believers and be prepared to be part of the blessing.⁷⁴ Soon after this prophetic message, Nagaland churches,

⁷²Lausanne Movement: Connecting influencers and ideas for global mission. The legacy of the Lausanne Movement. <https://www.lausanne.org/our-legacy> . (accessed on March 4,2020).

⁷³ I. Ben Wati. 147-150, 1974. Evangelism in Asia. <https://www.lausanne.org/content/lausanne-1974-documents> (accessed on March 4, 2020).

⁷⁴ Revival, Nagaland Christian Revival Church Golden Jubilee (1962-2012), Souvenir, 18.

including the Baptist churches, started to experience the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. But sadly, it also ushered in much confusion, which resulted in the splitting of various churches.

Jamir states that the second wave of Revival started in the year 1976 at Wamakung village through its then Pastor Imdangmeren. One Sunday, he reached the church premises for service, only to find it completely empty. At the church hour, he rang the church bell himself as the gatekeeper was also absent, and began the service as though the church was filled with people. He led the hymn singing and preached his prepared sermon exactly in the format of the service order and concluded it at the right time. Since this incident, the Spirit of God worked through him in his village and performed wonders through him. One lady in the village was paralyzed for many years and was unable to walk, when one day, he came and prayed for her. Then he commanded her, “In the name of Jesus Christ, stand up and walk!” Immediately, she got up and began to walk. After witnessing this miracle, people began to believe in God and confess their sins, and the Revival movement began to spread once again.⁷⁵

In 1973, the Spirit of God directed Gariphema village to fast and pray for three days and in the meeting, this prophecy came to them, “your works have been weighed on the scale and found wanting, therefore you should host another Nagaland Prayer meeting this year.” They obeyed the Lord and hosted the meeting and during this meeting again the Holy Spirit gave another message:

Your village is compared with Jerusalem and your people with the Israelites. Therefore, you should not look at other villages or people. You are different. You will obey, do my work and follow my commandments. I have named my Church in your village. Therefore, every year you will host the Nagaland Pentecost Day of Prayer so that believers will come to this place to be revived.⁷⁶

Since then, the villagers obeyed the Lord and hosted prayer meetings every year. But in 1978, people started to complain because the responsibilities of hosting the meeting was

⁷⁵ Interview with Lima Jamir on 1/5/2020.

⁷⁶ Thejano Kets, *Pneuma: The Spirit of Revival*, 121-122.

overwhelming them every year. So, the Nagaland Pentecost Day of Prayer was not hosted in 1978. Immediately the message of the Lord came to the villagers, “You have not believed my word and if you will not obey my word and follow my commands, you will see! This year you shall not eat the fruit of your labor and an epidemic will be on your livestock and then you will know whether it is true or not.”⁷⁷

The paddy yielded its flowers, but it could not bear any seeds; it was barren, desolate and lifeless. The little that was harvested and brought home was bitter, unpleasant, foul and could not be eaten. Even the animals refused to eat it and many livestock were destroyed through an epidemic.⁷⁸ This incident was a wakeup call for the believers of Gariphema, and ever since, they have been obedient to God and have been hosting the Nagaland Pentecost Day of Prayer.

On 11 October 1976, the Konyak⁷⁹ Nagas experienced the Revival in their churches in which similar phenomenons were experienced such as speaking of tongues, healings and signs and experience mass conversion.⁸⁰ They stopped using traditional ornaments and dresses which had connection with their previous religion. The use of opium was dropped by seventy percent – this had been a major problem among the Konyak tribe. The people started to bring human skulls⁸¹ to burn during the Revival meetings and began to confess their sins.⁸²

Those who witnessed this second wave of Revival clearly recall the events which are forever engraved in their hearts. Imchen recalls the Revival meetings in church as filled with people singing, crying, speaking in tongues. She states, “We would all go to church before dawn and spend the whole day there. We would sing and jump and dance for hours at end,

⁷⁷ Ibid., 123.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 124.

⁷⁹ Konyak tribe is the largest tribe and the last tribe to practice head-hunting among the Nagas.

⁸⁰ Konyak Baptist Church Golden Jubilee. 1949-1999, 70.

⁸¹ Human skulls were considered as a trophy or sign of honour for the Nagas during the head-hunting period. The skulls were hung outside the houses and the more skulls one possessed, the more popular they were.

⁸² V.K. Nuh, *Nagaland Church and Politics*, (Kohima: Vision Press, 1986), 55.

filled by the power of God. Even after singing and shouting the whole day, our voices would not be hoarse; even after jumping the whole day, our feet would not be tired.”⁸³ They all felt the Holy Spirit moving in their midst and many of them spoke in tongues, saw visions and prophesied.

Jamir also recalls the second wave of Revival as one where there was mass movement of change among the believers in Nagaland. Truckloads of alcohol and tobacco were collected from the masses and burned in bulk. People also burned pop records and anything which was not related to the gospel, as they believed these were distractions from the Word of God. The healing of sick people and the casting out of demons from people were prevalent all over the land. He also personally experienced the power of the Holy Spirit when one of the counsellors at the Revival program prayed for him. He states, “As soon as the counsellor laid his hands on me, and prayed for me, I got to my feet. My spirit was then transported to the heavenly realm and I experienced unspeakable joy in my heart which surpassed all understanding. I began to realize and experience how much Jesus Christ had suffered for me and I broke down completely. I simultaneously felt heavenly joy exploding within me, and the experience changed my life forever.”⁸⁴

There were so many important women who played a major role in the Revival. Beilieu Shuya was greatly used by God as she received the Holy Spirit in the 1960s. When the believers were praying and fasting, the Lord spoke through Opeu that Shuya should lay hands upon the people and pray. Obeying the prophetic words, she began to pray for all the people, including the pastors and leaders. The Holy Spirit started to move mightily when she started to lay hands on them. She then started Bible classes for people; she walked miles preaching the gospel from

⁸³ Interview with Narola Imchen on 1/4/2020.

⁸⁴ Interview with Lima Jamir on 1/5/2020.

village to village. She played a major role in bringing about the Revival in Arunachal Pradesh⁸⁵ where they witnessed a major outpouring of the Holy Spirit.⁸⁶

Another important impact of the Revival movement among the women who became an important figure is Narola Imchen who was part of the second wave of Revival in Nagaland. Imchen recalls, “I was ten years old when I experienced the Revival. During the Revival, the Holy Spirit convicted me to serve God. I made a covenant with God to go for theological studies when I grew up. I was so moved and amazed by how God was moving and felt the urgency deep in my heart for the Gospel to go to the ends of the earth.”⁸⁷ As a result of the Revival and the work of the Holy Spirit in Imchen’s life, she later became the first woman in India to earn Ph.D. in History of Christianity, and is also the first woman Principal of Eastern Theological College, India, which was started by the American missionaries in 1905.

A significant result of the Revival movement was that prayer homes came into existence. This is a place like a monastery, where people can stay, pray and fast. It was a direct result of the Revival movement, during which people became thirstier for the gospel. They wanted to gather often and seek the Lord. It was in the year 1965, under the direction of the Lord, the first prayer center came into being under the leadership of Dielievi.⁸⁸ Ever since then, today in Nagaland, almost every Revival church has their own prayer center where people can go and fast. Ralph Winter remarks, “There is a small nation between Burma and the rest of India where churches are rapidly growing. Revival sweeping across the land and churches raising mission-minded vision has a great hope in the churches of Naga people in the world.”⁸⁹

⁸⁵ A province near Nagaland in north-east India which is mostly Buddhist.

⁸⁶ Rokosano Koza, *Pneuma: The Spirit of Revival*, ed. by Mezhusevi Zutso (Kohima: NCRC Literature Press, 2017), 202-203.

ed. by Mezhusevi Zutso (Kohima: NCRC Literature Press, 2017), 194-195.

⁸⁷ Interview with Narola Imchen on 1/4/2020.

⁸⁸ Interview with Zhouweyi Nyekha on 1/2/2020.

⁸⁹ V.K Nuh, *165 years history of Naga Baptists Churches* (Kohima: MEK Computers, 2006), 91.

Akin to the Revivals in Wales, Azusa Street Revival and East Africa Revival, the key leaders of the Naga Revival were mostly lay people who were used mightily by God for the Revival movement. The Revival played a major role in the growth of Christianity in Nagaland. The Revival also spread to different parts of India, and at present, the Revival churches are found in India in twenty-five states. It also impacted the neighboring South East Asian countries such as Nepal, Bhutan, China, Myanmar, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Thailand and the USA.⁹⁰

⁹⁰ Yoruba Christian Revival Church, Golden Jubilee, (1964-20140), Souvenir, 28-29.

CONCLUSION

This thesis is an attempt to contribute to the literature on the history of the Nagaland Revival, and I hope the following points will help in its advancement. First, I have tried my best to present a balanced account about the background and context of the Revival history of Nagaland, devoid of any bias. This phenomenon was not man-induced, and thus all credit is allocated to God.

Second, I have attempted to give voice to the opposition's point of view on the Revival movement in Nagaland. Most scholars have focussed on the Revival from the Baptist perspective, and hence I have tried to narrate the history from the perspective of the Revivalists too. There have been opposition to the Revival movement, especially in the beginning, from the Baptists of Nagaland on the issue of the continuity of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Even today, there exists no proper academic research in Nagaland for this topic. This thesis will be a first, in that sense.

Third, I have tried to give a nuanced account of the Repentance revival, the Polycentric Phenomenon of Nagaland Revival and the New Revival pattern after Billy Graham's visitation and crusade. Since the 1950's, this ongoing revival keeps changing in theme, but the character remains the same; I have especially attempted to enunciate the various angles of the Revival movements through the period from the 1950s-1970s in Nagaland.

Fourth, I have tried to document some of the revival accounts through personal interviews with people who have experienced the Revival movement in Nagaland first-hand, have contributed in it, and have been impacted by it.

I hope that this work will be a helpful source for more researchers who study about the Revival history of Nagaland and the global trends in Christianity. I also hope that all who read this thesis will be blessed through the work of the Triune God among the Nagas.

As with any movement which is led by the hand of God, the miraculous accounts of thousands of people are too vast to record. Hence, just a handful of these experiences have been recorded here as a representation. From its genesis to the ongoing movement prevalent today, the Revival movement of Nagaland has reinforced the spiritual growth of the Nagas and their testimonies will be a blessing for generations to come.

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